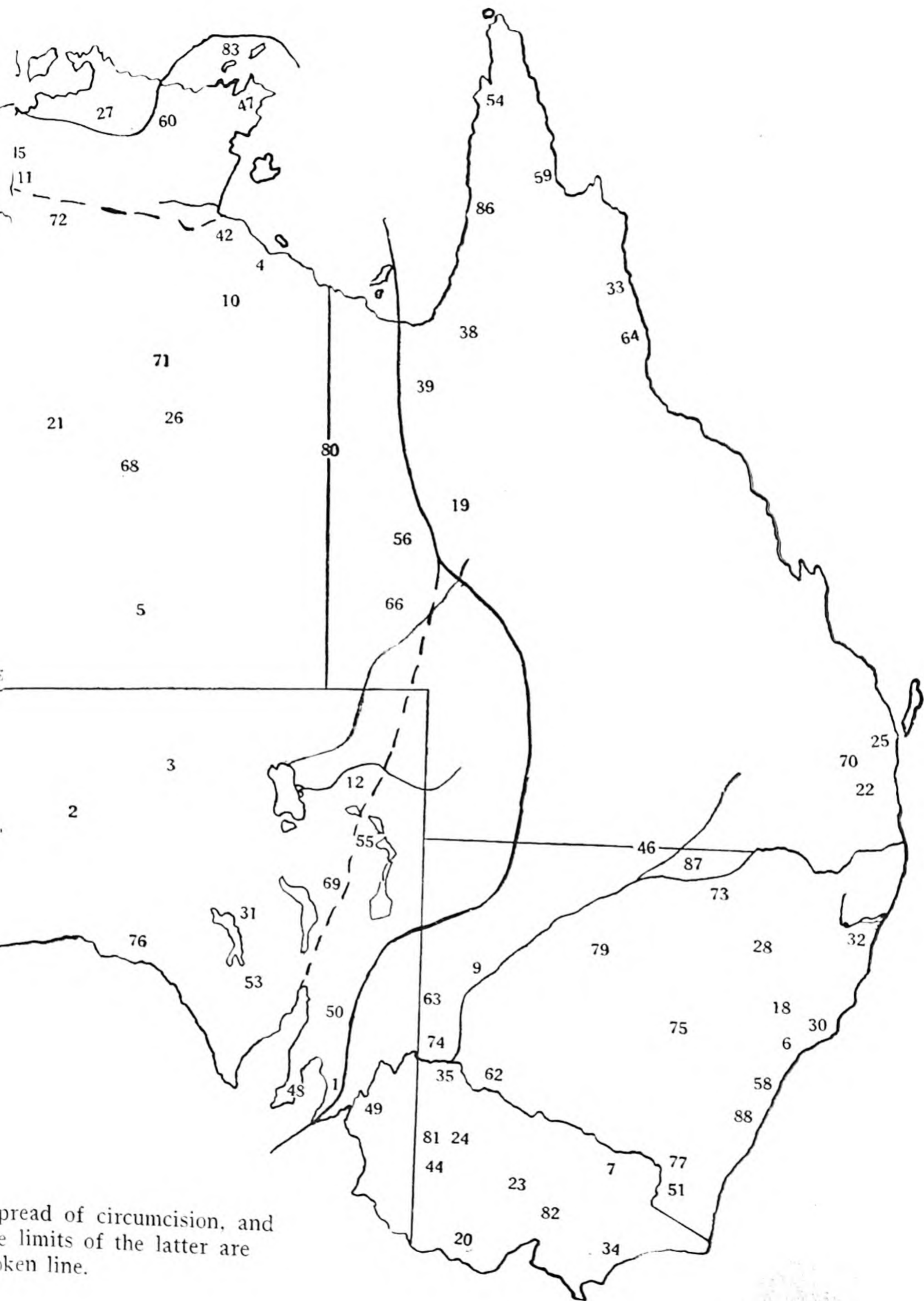
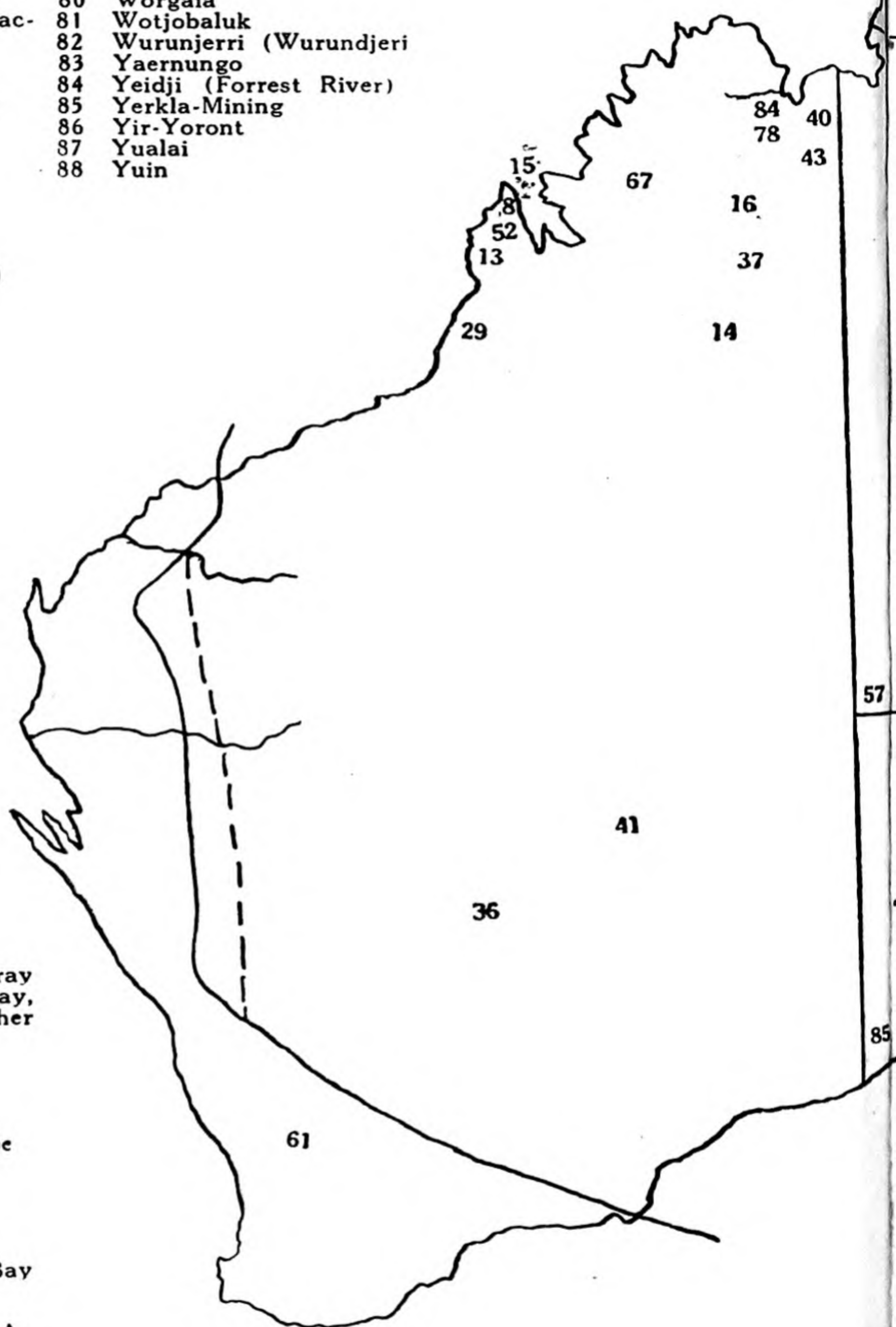




spread of circumcision, and
the limits of the latter are
indicated by a dashed line.

KEY TO NUMBERS ON MAP

1	Adelaide Tribes (Kaurna, etc.)	71	Waramunga
2	Aluridja Tribes (Antakerinya, Kokata, Jangkundjara, Ngalea, Wonggai, and some others)	72	Wardaman
3	Antakerinya	73	Weilwan
4	Anula	74	Wimbaio (Maraura)
5	Aranda (Arunta)	75	Wiradjeri
6	Awabakal (Lake Mac- quarie)	76	Wirangu
7	Bangerang	77	Wolgal
8	Bard	78	Wolyamidi
9	Barkinji (Wampangee)	79	Wongaibon
10	Binbinga	80	Worgaia
11	Daly River Tribes	81	Wotjobaluk
12	Dieri	82	Wurunjerri (Wurundjeri)
13	Djabber-Djabber	83	Yaernungo
14	Djaru	84	Yeidji (Forrest River)
15	Djau	85	Yerkla-Mining
16	Djerag	86	Yir-Yoront
17	Fraser Island (Batjala)	87	Yualai
18	Geawe-Gal	88	Yuin
19	Goa (Koa)		
19A	Gringai		
20	Gunditj-Mara		
21	Ipirra (Walpari)		
22	Jagara		
23	Jajauring		
24	Jupagalk		
25	Kabi		
26	Kaitish		
27	Kakadu		
28	Kamilaroi		
29	Karadjeri		
30	Kattang		
31	Kokata		
32	Kumbaingeri		
33	Kungganji		
34	Kurnai		
35	Laitu-Laitu		
36	Laverton Tribes		
37	Lunga		
38	Maikulan		
39	Maitakudi		
40	Malngin		
41	Mandjindja		
42	Mara		
43	Miriwun		
44	Mukjarawaint		
45	Mulukmuluk		
46	Murawari		
47	Murngin		
48	Narrang-ga		
49	Narrinyeri (Lower Murray and Encounter Bay, Jaralde and other tribes)		
50	Ngaduri		
51	Ngarigo		
52	Nyul-Nyul		
53	Pankala		
54	Pennefather River Tribe (Nggerikudi, etc.)		
55	Piladapa		
56	Pita-Pita		
57	Pitjintara		
58	Port Jackson Tribes		
59	Princess Charlotte Bay Tribes		
60	Rembarunga		
61	South-West Corner, W.A.		
62	Ta-Ta-Thi		
62A	Tjingili		
63	Tongaranka (Danggali)		
64	Tully River Tribes		
65	Turrbal (possibly part of Jagara, No. 22)		
66	Ulupulu (Karanja)		
67	Ungarinyin		
68	Unmatjera (Anmatjera)		
69	Wailpi		
70	Wakka		



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ABORIGINAL MEN OF HIGH DEGREE

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University of Queensland

ABORIGINAL MEN OF HIGH DEGREE

A. P. ELKIN, M.A.

Professor of Anthropology, University of Sydney.

*The John Murtagh Macrossan Memorial Lectures
for 1944*

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N.T.S.A.—G. Taplin, *The Narrinyeri, an Account of the Tribes of South-East Australia*, 1878.

N.T.S.E.A.—A. W. Howitt, *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, 1904.

Rec. S.A. Museum—*Records of the South Australian Museum*.

Roy. Soc. N.S.W.—*Journal of the Royal Society of New South Wales*.

Sth. Aust. Geog. Jnl.—*South Australian Geographical Journal*.

Vict. Geog. Jnl.—*Victorian Geographical Journal*.

INTRODUCTION

The term medicine-man as applied to Aboriginal Australia is used in a wide sense. Medicine-men are leeches, in that they use objective means for the curing of illnesses and wounds. They are magical practitioners, for they cure some sicknesses by magical rituals and spells. In many parts, too, they are sorcerers as well; they know how to, and may, insert evil magic, extract "human fat," or cause the soul to leave the victim's body, and so cause sickness and death. And finally, they also possess, in many cases, occult powers: they can commune with the dead; they see spirits fly through the air, and do the same themselves; they go up to the sky; they practise telepathy, and mass hypnotism; and they gain knowledge by psychical means of what occurs at a distance. Such are the claims and beliefs. They therefore partake of the character of witches, clairvoyants, mediums and psychic experts.

The very existence of such powers suggests that mere instruction in leech-craft or indeed in the use of magical substances is not sufficient to make a person a medicine-man. He possesses or is endowed with powers concerned with much else besides causing and curing illness. And even with regard to this, the Aborigines insist that the possession of such super-normal powers is the basis of the medicine-man's curative efforts. He is a person of high degree, and not merely a member of a profession; he is a "clever man"—one who has been admitted to the secrets not disclosed to the ordinary, though fully initiated, man. Moreover, the admission to such knowledge and the ritual

INTRODUCTION

endowment with "life" are the necessary prelude to the exercise of super-normal and magical powers.

A survey of the rites of the making of medicine-men reveals the type of ritual deemed essential and the powers with which they are endowed. We have information, often inadequate, for about eighty tribes. The inadequacy of the information is not surprising, seeing that the investigator must be on very confidential terms with the medicine-man before the latter can be expected to impart his knowledge and beliefs, and to describe his experiences. Moreover, a sound knowledge of the native language is also desirable, if not essential. Unfortunately, very little attention has been paid to the medicine-men, possibly because the prevailing concept of the inferiority of the Aborigines did not lead anyone to expect that any individuals would be worth study and understanding. In any case, native doctors were too often simply passed off as old rogues. Not even did Spencer and Gillen's interesting descriptions of medicine-men in their books on the Native Tribes of Central and North-Central Australia, and the useful suggestions in A. W. Howitt's *Native Tribes of South-East Australia* inspire workers to probe deeply into this field. In recent years, Dr. W. L. Warner, Mr. R. H. Berndt and myself have paid some attention to the subject, and I hope that the publication of these lectures will result in more attention being paid to this sphere of native life. If this occurs, I trust that the Chancellor and Senate of the University of Queensland will feel that their selection of the John Murtagh Macrossan Lecturer for 1944 was worth-while.

For my own part, I considered that the best way to show my appreciation of the honour conferred on me by the University of Queensland was to select a field in which much research is required, and one which is of absorbing human interest.

Chapters I and II are the lectures as delivered, with a

INTRODUCTION

few additions. Chapters III and IV consist of a survey of our present knowledge of the Making and Powers of Aboriginal Medicine-Men, and provide the background of material for the actual lectures. But the importance of "men of high degree" and of psychic practices in Aboriginal life was brought home to me during field-work experience in several parts of Australia. Without that experience, these lectures would not have been given.

I would like to express my thanks to the Vice-Chancellor and members of the Professorial Board of the University of Queensland, and to Mr. T. Thatcher, Secretary of the Public Lectures Committee, for their hospitality and kindness to me during my visit to Brisbane for the purpose of delivering the lectures.

I also thank Mr. R. M. Berndt for making special investigations for me into the subject of these lectures and putting the results at my disposal; and Miss Jean Craig, Teaching-Fellow in my own Department, for her constant and ever-ready help in the preparation of this book for publication.

A. P. ELKIN

Department of Anthropology,
University of Sydney,
January, 1945.

Part I

THE PERSONALITY, MAKING AND POWERS
OF ABORIGINAL MEN OF HIGH DEGREE

Chapter I

ABORIGINAL MEN OF HIGH DEGREE THEIR PERSONALITY AND "MAKING"

Aboriginal Life—A Progress in Knowledge.

Everywhere in Aboriginal Australia, the young male, on approaching or reaching puberty, leaves behind him the interests of childhood. Henceforth, he speaks and thinks more and more as a man. In an unforgettable ceremonial manner, he is taken from the camp and scenes of his irresponsible early years. He becomes the subject of a series of rites, extending with intervals over several years. The trials which he undergoes and the operations performed on him vary in different parts of the continent. But the general pattern and purpose of the ritual are the same. He "dies" to the former life of childhood and of ignorance of esoteric knowledge, and "rises" or is "reborn" to a new life. The latter is not merely adult life, for which he has meanwhile been disciplined and instructed. It is much more: it is a life of knowledge and power. At the end of the ritual journey, with its trials, loneliness, "death," revelations and rejoicing, he can say: "Whereas previously I was blind to the significance of the seasons, of natural species, of heavenly bodies and of man himself, now I begin to see; and whereas before I did not understand the secret of life, now I begin to know."

The word 'secret' is used advisedly. Understanding of life and man is reserved for the initiated, for those who have successfully passed through the various degrees. There are several of these, each of which is marked by its

own ritual, name and portion of esoteric knowledge. At various stages in his progress, after due warning and preparation, and when in a condition of heightened suggestibility, the novice is shown sacred symbols (*tjurunga*) of wood or stone, secret ceremonies and sacred rites, he hears sacred chants, and is given some intimation of the significance and wonder of what he has seen or heard.

He does not see or learn everything at one time, or even during the main series of initiation rites. There is so much to know that many years are needed. Moreover, it must be learnt word- and action-perfect, for the purpose is not simply to interest the 'new man' and to enhance his personality, but also to preserve the sacred heritage, and to ensure the future of the tribe. For what is revealed to him is the complex of rites, chants, sacred sites, myths, and sanctions of behaviour, on which its life and future are believed to depend. This is usually summed up in one word, such as *Altjiringa*, *Djugur*, *Bugari*, *Unggud*, or *Maratal* of the *Aranda*, *Aluridja*, *Karadjeri*, *Ungarinyin* or *Wiradjeri* tribes respectively. This word signifies the "eternal dream-time," which is both a time and a state of life. It denotes the time and the power of the tribal cult-heroes, who are still present, though they performed their mighty works in the long-past. Moreover, the "dream-time" and its heroes are the source of life in man and nature. Therefore, to be brought into full realization of the *Altjiringa*, is to share actively in that stream of life and power which is not hampered by the limitations of space and time.

A man grows in knowledge by attending initiations and various cult-ceremonies, and by learning from the "Masters." Eventually he plays a leading part in the "dream-time" rituals, on sacred ground, painted with arm-blood or red ochre sanctified by the chanting which accompanies its application, and carrying or beholding the

sacred symbols. On these occasions it is realized both by himself and all present that he is no longer himself: he is the great "dream-time" hero whose rôle he is re-enacting, even if only for a few minutes.

The function and purpose of these rituals are complex. They serve to strengthen in all present the realization of the "dream-time," and of the presence and power of its cult-heroes. They also remind, and impress on, all the sanctity and authority of traditional tribal behaviour. In some cases, too, they are believed to cause the natural species to increase in their wonted way, so that man may live. But in addition to these effects, the rituals, with their "dream-time" heroic associations, create and maintain in the participants unity of emotion, thought and action; they renew sentiments which make for social continuity and cohesion; and so, they bring about a highly desirable condition of social well-being and of individual certainty and courage.¹

The Problems of Daily Life.

Initiation into the secret ceremonial and mythological life of the tribe provides an authoritative background, a solid footing, and a sure hope for life. It gives general support and guidance in daily life, and links man to the unseen. But it does not help him to deal in a detailed way with the problems, desires and setbacks of daily life: For example:

1. Misfortune, bad luck, lack of success in love, in hunting or in fighting, illness or death.
2. Lack of knowledge of what is occurring out of sight and at a distance, and which may affect us, unless we are forewarned and can take precautions.

(1) A. P. Elkin, *The Australian Aborigines: How to Understand Them*, Chapter VII.

ABORIGINAL MEN OF HIGH DEGREE

3. Ignorance of what the spirits of the dead, or mischievous or evil spirits are likely to work on us.
And
4. the desire to obtain this, or that object or goal, the realization of which is fraught with various uncertainties and contingencies.

In Aboriginal life, these problems, setbacks and desires are met in two ways. The first is the way of magic, with its rites, spells, paraphernalia and concentration of thought. If it is designed to cause injury to an individual or social group, it is called black magic or sorcery; but white if it is used to prevent evil or to produce good or well-being.

The second way of meeting life's problems leads to the realm of psychic powers (and presumed psychic powers): hypnotism, clairvoyance, mediumship, telepathy, telaesthesia, and the conquest of space and time.

All persons can, and indeed do, possess in some degree, some of these powers. For example, in most tribes, everybody can practise some forms of black magic, and through dreams, and traditionally formalized systems of presentiments, know or learn what is happening at a distance of significance to themselves and to their friends. Thus, to see in a vision of the night, a person's dream totem (that is, the natural species or phenomenon which is his symbol in dreams), is to know that something is to happen to him, or to be done by him in relation to the dreamer. In many tribes, the various parts of the body are mapped out to symbolize in each case a prescribed type of classificatory relation, such as father, mother, sister's child, etcetera. If an involuntary twitching occurs in a muscle in the part associated with the class of father, the person immediately abstracts himself from all surrounding interests, and letting his head droop forward, as I have seen, enters a condition either of receptivity or of free associa-

tion. After a time, he becomes satisfied that such and such a person in the prescribed relationship will arrive before long. The information has "come" to him.²

To the Aborigines, there is nothing extraordinary about gaining information in these ways. Anyone can do so. But if he gets into difficulty or into doubt, for example, about the authenticity of a dream revelation or a presentiment, he can consult a specialist. For there are specialists; these are the medicine-men, the 'clever men,' the *karadji*, to use the term longest known to us. They are men of high degree.

The Personality of Medicine-Men.

Various questions arise concerning medicine-men; what sort of persons are they? How are they selected, or how do they know that they are to be medicine-men? What makes them what they are? What are their powers?

Let us consider the first question: What sort of persons are they?

A number of writers refer to the native doctor as an "imposter," "the greatest scamp of the tribe," or "as a rule the most cunning man in the tribe and a great humbug."³ These opinions are, however, based on superficial observation. When a native doctor sucks a magical bone out of a sick person's abdomen, and shows it to those around and to the patient, he is not a mere charlatan, bluffing his fellows because he introduced and produced the bone at the psychological moment by sleight of hand.

(2) A. P. Elkin, "Notes on the Psychic Life of the Australian Aborigines" *Mankind* (Sydney) Vol. 2, No. 3 (1937), p. 50.

(3) G. Taplin, in *N.T.S.A.*, p. 46. P. Beveridge, *The Aborigines of Victoria and the Riverina*, p. 64. C. Lumholz, *Among Cannibals*, p. 183. C. Strehlow, *Die Aranda— und Loritja—Stämme*, Teil IV, p. 42, says the "doctors" in general are the greatest swindlers and conjurers, who, by means of their deceits and frauds, are able to keep the people in dependence on them. When W. E. Roth (*Ethnol. Studies*, p. 154) says the doctors do not trust one another and "in reality are a 'bad lot'," he is referring to their practice of sorcery, and their keeping alive and potent the belief in the death-bone. See also Howitt (*N.T.S.E.A.*, p. 356).

Nor is he just play-acting for effect when, having rubbed the affected part of his patient in the "correct" manner, he gathers an invisible something in his hands, and solemnly walking a few steps away, casts 'it' into the air with a very decided jerk of the arms and opening of the hands. These are two of a number of traditional methods which he has learnt, and in which he and all believe—methods for extracting the ill from the patient, and so giving the latter assurance (often visible) of his cure. The cause has been removed.

We should remember that if a medicine-man himself becomes ill, he, too, calls in a fellow-practitioner to treat him in one of the accepted ways, although he knows all the professional methods (which we might call tricks). But he also desires earnestly, like all other sick persons, assurance that the cause of his pain or illness has been extracted and cast away, or that his wandering soul (if that be the diagnosis) has been caught and restored. The actions and chantings and production of 'bones' and 'stones' are but the outward expression and means of the doctor's personal victory over one or both of two factors: first, the malevolent activities of some person practising sorcery on the sick man or woman; and second, the patient's willingness to remain ill or even to die. This latter must be counteracted, and the will to be healthy and to live be restored.

Dr. F. E. Williams, when referring to similar beliefs and practices amongst the Keraki of the Trans-Fly region of Papua, agrees that the doctor there believes in his own power, although he realizes the trickery inherent in it. Dr. Williams, however, does not think that the Papuan doctor can be credited with sufficient insight to justify his methods, as a means of restoring confidence in his patients.⁴ But I can bear witness that there are Aboriginal

(4) F. E. Williams, *Papuans of the Trans-Fly*, p. 354.

medicine-men who do justify and explain their procedure in just this way.⁵

To sum up: medicine-men are not imposters. They practise their profession in the way which both they and their fellow tribesfolk have inherited, and which they believe, and have found, to be effective. If a doctor's efforts fail, it means that he was summoned too late, or that the power of the distant sorcerer was too great, or that the patient had broken a very important taboo, or that the spirits of the "dead" would not be deprived of the company of the sick person's spirit; all of which finds an echo in our own experiences and attitudes.

It is reported, however, that an imposter may occasionally appear (like our charlatan) who claims to possess power and knowledge, hoping thereby to gain prestige or goods. But the shallowness of his claim is eventually seen through.⁶ In any case, a medicine-man must be able to maintain his prestige and "doctor-personality" by success in his specialization, or by convincing his tribesmen that his explanations of failures are satisfactory. Otherwise faith in him will wane, and he will realize that he has lost his powers. He will recall that he has broken one or more of the taboos, on the observance of which the maintenance of his power depends. For example, a doctor must not drink hot water; must not be bitten by certain ants; must not be immersed in salt water, or must not eat certain foods. As the infringement of some of these may be accidental, the discredited practitioner has an honourable way out. In other cases, he can no longer practise because he has ceased to dream of the spirits of the dead.

(5) I think particularly of a *karadji* of the Kattang tribe, Port Stephens District, N.S.W., who maintained that what made the patient better was his faith in himself. If the *karadji* told him to get up next morning after the 'treatment' and he did so, he would be cured, otherwise he would pine away. (A. P. Elkin, "Notes of the Psychic Life of the Australian Aborigines," *Mankind* (Sydney), Vol. 2, No. 3 (1937), p. 52.)

(6) Field Notes. Also W. E. Roth, *Bulletin* 5, p. 31, section 126. C. C. Greenway, in a report on "Australian Languages and Traditions," *Jnl. Anth. Inst.*, Vol. VII, 188, p. 243. P. Kaberry, *Aboriginal Woman*, p. 251.

ABORIGINAL MEN OF HIGH DEGREE

In some tribes, at least, a doctor who breaks the food taboos associated with his profession, is discredited; indeed it is only one with a very powerful personality who would dare risk his reputation and practice in this way.⁷

To practise a profession so "hedged about" with forms of "ritual" behaviour, which can be observed by all, is at least some guarantee that the person concerned is genuine. Imposters are unlikely to appear except in a condition of tribal and cultural disintegration, when cunning persons might think there is an opportunity to gain some position of privilege. Moreover, unthinking and credulous white men sometimes encourage the medicine-man to play on the former's desire for mystery. He recognizes what the white man hopes to hear, and desires to pay for, and lowering his voice to tones of secrecy, he relates satisfying tales of magic and mystery. But look at the glint of merriment in the old doctor's eyes, as he thinks to himself, "White man 'nother kind; white man fool."

Medicine-Men, Outstanding Personalities!

If the superficial observation of medicine-men as scoundrels and imposters be not true, is it possible that it arises from the fact that these men are really clever, endowed with knowledge above the average, and marked by strong personalities? Beneath the unkempt hair, above

(7) E.g., H. Basedow, *The Australian Aboriginal*, p. 180: "In the Central Australian tribes a medicine-man should not eat of kangaroo which has been feeding upon new green grass; if he does, some of his mystic powers will leak out of his body, and he will immediately drop in the estimation of his tribal admirers. If the offence is repeated a number of times, he is discredited entirely . . . There are, of course, a great number of restrictions which the conscientious practitioner observes most punctiliously." See also: C. Strehlow, *Die Aranda— und Loritja—Stämme*, Teil IV, pp. 39, 42. Spencer and Gillen, *Nat. T.C.A.*, p. 525, the medicine-man must not eat fat or warm meat, nor inhale smoke from burning bones; nor be bitten by a "bull-dog" ant. Compare the same authors, *Nor. T.C.A.*, pp. 481, 485; drinking anything hot is forbidden. In the Waramunga, numerous food restrictions must be observed by a doctor, until he is old; and he must only drink a moderate amount of water. Vide Warner, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-8, for salt-water taboo. Dr. Warner (p. 216) does not think that the Murngin doctors observed any food-taboos except during their making and training.

a naked body or one "clothed" in the white man's "casts-off," and in an immobile face, shine shrewd, penetrating eyes—eyes that look you all the way through—the lenses of a mind which is photographing your very character and intentions. I have seen those eyes and felt that mind at work when I have sought knowledge which only the man of high degree could impart. I have known white persons almost fear the eyes of a *karadji*, so all-seeing, deep and quiet did they seem. This "clever-man" was definitely an outstanding person, a clear thinker, a man of decision, one who believed, and acted on the belief, that he possessed psychic power, the power to will others to have faith in themselves.

"You could always tell a medicine-man (*walemira*) by the intelligent look in his eyes," two Wiradjeri informants told Mr. R. M. Berndt, "and great ones were enveloped in a peculiar atmosphere which caused people to feel different."

The Rev. T. T. Webb, referring to the Murngin (north-east Arnhem Land), says that, speaking generally, the doctors are "not men of outstanding personality or of forcefulness of character," and Professor Warner, with reference to the same area, and Dr. W. E. Roth for North-West-Central Queensland, say that the doctor's personality was not different from that of any ordinary man, except that he was known to possess special magical powers.⁸

As a result of my own experience and of a close examination of reports on the subject, I am satisfied that medicine-men are, generally speaking, persons of special knowledge, self-assurance and initiative, and that association with them quickly reveals this fact. Nor is there anything mysterious or mystic about it:

(8) T. T. Webb, "The Making of a Marnngit," *Oceania*, Vol. VI, No. 3, p. 337. W. L. Warner, *op. cit.*, p. 210. W. E. Roth, *Ethnol. Studies*, pp. 153-4.

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- (1) They are men who have passed through a very striking ritual and experience of being "made" (to be described later); to face, and to persist in, this requires determination and courage.
- (2) They have been admitted to a special body of esoteric magic and psychic lore.
- (3) They have been taught, and also learnt by observation, much real insight into the working of the minds of their fellows.
- (4) They build up a store of information regarding the doings, especially the "sins" of omission and commission, of their fellows, which knowledge can be used, if necessary, as explanation of illnesses and accidents.⁹
- (5) They keep account, too, of the attitudes of their local group, clan or tribe, towards other groups, so that, in case of "divining a murderer" at an inquest, they can attribute the "crime" to a person or group, whom their own group would be willing to suspect or blame.
- (6) They learn from their teachers and from observation, the signs or symptoms of illnesses which can normally be cured, or from which the patient can be expected to recover, and in which their magical methods and faith-healing are likely to be successful. Likewise, they can distinguish those which are likely to prove fatal; for these they must have satisfactory explanations, and their main task is to prepare the patient for death.

(9) Dr. W. E. Roth, referring to north-west-central Queensland, says that whenever a large number of natives are in camp, the doctor is believed to keep his eyes and ears well open, and not to go to sleep at night. He thus gleans heaps of information, and also often learns who possesses a death-bone and even the name of the person "pointed." (*Ethnol. Studies*, p. 154.)

PERSONALITY AND MAKING

- (7) Those who claim power to predict or to control natural phenomena possess a fund of knowledge concerning the signs which mark changes in the weather, such as the sweating ground, ants carrying their eggs upwards for safety, the form of the clouds, variations in temperature and such like. This enables them to act or speak with reasonable certainty.
- (8) In cases where the "clever men" claim psychic powers and are expected to practise them, they have learnt by instruction and practice how to do so; for example, how to interpret dreams, how to ascertain what is happening at a distance, or how to make those present "see" or believe that they, the 'doctors,' are moving through the air.
- (9) They are recognized by their tribe or community as possessing the power to outwit malign spirits and persons, to control the elements, to have foreknowledge of an enemy's approach, and to keep pestilence away from the camp.

I have not referred to what we might call the ordinary remedies for, and treatments of, ills and accidents. In many tribes, the old women attend to this, although in some, the 'medicine-man' does so. Normally, however, his special power being occult, he is only called in when the illness is thought to be caused magically or animistically (by the actions of a malevolent person or spirit).

In the light of the foregoing facts, it is obvious that a medicine-man, at least one who has not lost his 'mana,' his power and prestige, must stand out in his community. He is superior in knowledge, in experience, and in psychic power, and this must be reflected in his attitude and general bearing, especially when confronted with the abnormal or unexpected. It is for this reason that he

seems to be somewhat reserved except towards his fellow-doctors, even though he is usually well liked.

Moreover, the medicine-man's personality is not an individual phenomenon. Because of his "making" and training and deeds, a special social personality is ascribed to him by his fellows: He is essential to their social well-being, and to the maintenance of satisfactory relations with the unseen—with the spirits of the dead and of the bush, with the rainbow-serpent and the sky-being, and with sorcerers in strange places.

For all these reasons, we can say that the medicine-man is a man of special, and often of outstanding, personality.¹⁰

Medicine-men are normal.

It has been maintained that medicine-men are abnormal and neurotic.¹¹ At first sight, there might seem to be some justification for holding that there is something "strange" or queer about men who claim to have had their "insides" exchanged for spirit-"insides," to carry quartz-stones, bones and spirit-snakes, etcetera, in their bodies—

(10) The following references bear on the above discussion:

- P. Kaberry, *Aboriginal Woman*, p. 252;
- R. & C. Berndt, "A Preliminary Report of Field-Work in the Ooldea Region," *Oceania*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, pp. 58-61;
- Idem*: Unpublished report on the Wiradjeri;
- W. L. Warner, *op. cit.*, pp. 198, 230-232;
- W. E. Harney, personal correspondence;
- H. Basedow, *The Australian Aboriginal*, p. 179;
- Spencer and Gillen, *Nat. T.C.A.*, p. 522, say that the medicine-men "have considerable influence in the tribe;"
- W. Ridley, *Kamilaroi and other Australian Languages*, p. 158, wrote in 1875, "The Kuradyis exercise a strong spell over the minds of their people." This spell still exists amongst the old people in 1944, as my recent inquiries (September, 1944) have shown;
- J. Dawson, *Australian Aborigines*, p. 56, referring to tribes in south-western Victoria, said that great confidence was reposed in the skill of the tribal doctor, and not without reason, for he generally prescribed sensible remedies. When these failed, he had resource to supernatural means and various artifices;
- Dr. W. L. Sharp, "Ritual Life and Economics of the Yir-Yoront," *Oceania*, Vol. V, No. 1, p. 36, says that reputed ability in "killing" or "curing" adds to an individual's prestige.

(11) P. Radin, *Primitive Religion*, pp. 131-2; he says that Aranda medicine-men are of neurotic epileptoid type.

who claim to be able to converse with the dead, to travel invisibly through space, to visit the sky-land, and so on. But no observer records that Aboriginal medicine-men, or sorcerers, are, apart from their occult-powers and intellectual attainments, other than normal Aboriginal personalities. They live the ordinary family and social life, and take part in the regular ritual and ceremonial life of their tribe, like any other initiated men. As Dr. W. E. Roth said, and he was a physician who knew his Aborigines very well, "Beyond their occult powers" (of curing and causing sickness), "the doctors, except for certain articles which they kept about them, have nothing to distinguish them from the other individuals in the camp; they engage in similar pursuits, enjoy no extra rights, they marry and may themselves get sick or die through similar agencies."¹²

Amongst the Murngin, too, in spite of their occult experiences and powers, the medicine-men live the ordinary life of all the tribesmen, and are jovial and pleasant in their social relations. Professor Warner saw no indications of psychopathic personality. On the contrary, the doctors are, psychologically and mentally, a very normal group.¹³

The point to be stressed is that while the medicine-man is considered to possess great power and faculties especially developed, none of his power is regarded as *extra-ordinary*, or abnormal. It is possessed and exercised against an accepted background of belief, and in some degree, though usually in a very slight degree, it is possessed by all. Everybody may have dream-experiences of occult significance, though only the "trained" man may fully understand them. Everybody may have intimations of what is happening at a distance, although only the medicine-man may be able to seek and obtain such knowledge by occult means. In many tribes, an individual's totem will bring

(12) W. E. Roth, *Ethnol. Studies*, pp. 153-4.

(13) W. L. Warner, *op. cit.*, p. 210. T. T. Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 337. R. & C. Berndt, *op. cit.*, *Oceania*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, pp. 61-2.

him information and help in the waking or in the dreaming state; but it is usually only the medicine-man who has an individual totem, or 'familiar,' all to himself, which assists him in various aspects of his profession. In some tribes, almost any person who cares to learn can work black magic, but it is only the 'doctor' who can withdraw the effects of the magical rite from the victim.

The medicine-man, for his part, simply possesses these and other faculties in a developed degree, the result of being gifted, of having passed through an experience of 'making,' which gave him power and confidence, and of specializing and training. Moreover, he was first of all a fully initiated member of the tribe, disciplined by preparation for custodianship of tribal mysteries, and indoctrinated with a respect for tribal sanctions and norms of life. Only after this did he pass through a ritual experience with its consequences of further power and knowledge. He is, therefore, a *man of high degree*. As such he is a more complete exponent of normal life than those with less appreciation and understanding of the background of that life—a background which is mystical and psychic, magical and animistic. Moreover, unless a man were capable of such a high degree of normality, it is unlikely that he would receive the necessary training and insight from other doctors, and in any case, he would not enjoy the confidence, respect and prestige which are essential for a successful career. At least, there is no evidence of any person, except of this type, becoming a man of high degree. Aboriginal culture does not put any premium on the epileptic or abnormal of any sort. It is rather an expression of a world of order and normality, deriving from the long-past dream-time of the culture-heroes, through the present, to the future.

Finally, emphasis should be placed on the fact that a medicine-man's life is one of self-discipline, preceded by training, of social responsibility, and of contact with

powerful forces or spiritual beings. He must work coolly and deliberately, when his services are required, and not as some mental disturbance dictates or disposes. Nor does he seek the necessary knowledge or power when practising, through drug or violent dance, but rather through quietness and receptivity, meditation and recollection, observation and inference, concentration and decision. His is a profession for which he has been duly prepared and trained. It is not a kink, though it is possible that sometimes a man may be misled into believing that he "was made" in some dream-experience, but that alone will not accredit him. In the same way we must distinguish amongst ourselves the well-trained and accredited psycho-therapist and analyst, from the amateur with a psycho-analytical or similar kink. It is the latter who is usually somewhat abnormal, and who seems unable to see through himself, or to realise that he should do so.

In other words, the real medicine-man, the man of high degree, is a professional individual of special training, whose personality, from the point of view of the community, reaches a high degree of normality.

How is the Doctor selected or "called?"

An individual is selected or called to be a doctor ("clever-man") in one of three ways:

- (1) The elders, and especially the medicine-men, noticed that from the postulant's earliest years, or from his youth, he was gifted and had leanings towards the profession. He was a thoughtful child, who liked being with the elders and the medicine-men. He had probably shown a great interest in tribal lore, and may even have had some psychic experiences. Indeed, his eyes may

have revealed his fitness for the profession. Such early manifestation of fitness and association with medicine-men, while still a child, seem to have been a necessary pre-requisite in South-East Australia.¹⁴ In the Wiradjeri tribe, for example, the lad's powers of interpretation were tested by the use of specially constructed sentences in conversation with him; and he was given intensive training in tribal mythology. He was also told about the simpler aspects of the profession, and received his individual totem or familiar.

- (2) Closely allied with this method of selection is that of inheritance of the "position" or profession of the medicine-man. It is common in primitive and civilized societies for a father to desire that his son should succeed him in his social or professional position, and to help him to do so. The sphere of magic and religion is no exception to this tendency. But, of course, in the professional sphere descent alone is seldom enough, though nepotism has not been unknown to enter there. Training, fitness and acceptableness, however, are also necessary. And even amongst the Aborigines, a doctor's son had to have shown leanings and efficiency before he was trained and admitted to esoteric knowledge; in other words, even he had to be selected, or at least accepted.

The profession has been reported as hereditary, mostly patrilineal, in western New South Wales, the south-eastern corner of Queensland, parts of Cape York Peninsula, Eyre's Peninsula (South Australia), and in the Gascoyne and Ashburton

(14) This was so amongst the Wurundjeri (Victoria), Wiradjeri and associated tribes and the Yualai (New South Wales), and amongst the Dieri (South Australia). It is also reported for the Aluridja tribes now at Ooldea in the same State.

districts of Western Australia. The power of sorcery also tends to pass from father to son in north-east Arnhem Land. More complete information may have shown that this tendency was more widespread than we now know. This is probably true also of the custom of selection in childhood.¹⁵

- (3) The third method is an inner experience of being 'called,' or in some cases one which results from a desire to be 'called.' An individual has a vision of the spirits of the dead, or of other spirits. This may occur just as he is waking out of a sleep, in good health or when recovering from some illness. Or it may be deliberately sought by sleeping in an isolated place, particularly near the grave of a medicine-man, or some other enchanted spot. But if the aspirant's vision is interpreted by a medicine-man as showing that he is "called," he is taught what further psychic experiences to expect, and eventually he is trained in the profession.

An examination of the three ways of being 'called,' and what follows, reveals a number of common features:

- (1) The postulant must be selected or accepted by a number of members of the profession, whether in childhood or later.
- (2) He must pass through a special psychic experience, which is indeed his validation—his certificate.
- (3) This experience follows prescribed patterns in different regions, and therefore must be prepared

(15) See Chapters III and IV. In some tribes of north-west central Queensland, a magical object may be inserted in a novice, when quite a child, to make him a medicine-man. W. E. Roth, *Ethnol. Studies*, p. 153. Dr. Roth implies that selection while still a child was not the necessary or regular practice, as seems to have been the case in the Wiradjeri, New South Wales.

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for by meditation and other discipline; indeed, in some cases, and probably in most, if not all, medicine-men, the past-masters of the "craft," really perform a ritual around and on the postulant which is an enactment of this remarkable experience; but to him in his state of expectancy and in later interpretation, it may seem to be caused solely by spirits, though none the less objective for that.

- (4) The postulant has to be trained in his profession and to be entrusted with its esoteric lore.

THE MAKING OF MEDICINE-MEN: TAKING THE HIGH DEGREE

At first sight, there is nothing stranger in anthropological literature and in field-work than the descriptions given by Aboriginal medicine-men of the way in which they received their power. These seem so impossible and fantastic that we could be pardoned for dismissing them as mere inventions, or as the results of nightmare. But a study of the distribution of these experiences and an examination of their patterns give pause for thought. For the striking fact is not so much the weirdness of the details, as their similarity over wide regions of the continent, and even in apparently widely separated regions. In other words, we are confronted by a prescribed pattern of ritual experience through which medicine-men are 'made.' The following is a brief summary and analysis of the rites, based on the survey presented in Chapters III and IV.

Uncircumcision Regions.

South of the Murray River, they were made by a supernatural spirit, or by the spirits of the dead, in the bush or in the sky. The normal procedure was for the spirit to

open the postulant's side and to insert in it such magical substances as quartz crystals with which his powers were henceforth connected. The incision was healed without leaving a mark. Usually, too, the postulant was taken up to the sky-world. Indeed, the operation might be performed on him while there. In any case, he could henceforth visit the sky and converse with the ghosts and spirits who dwell there.

In south-western New South Wales, other medicine-men, or a cult-hero, performed the central rite in the 'making.' An incision was not made in the postulant's body, but in spite of that, an assistant totem (or familiar) and magical substances such as quartz crystals and mysterious cord, were pressed or rubbed and "sung" into him. He was also taken to the sky—this time on a doctor's magical cord: The experience seems to have been much the same in Gippsland (Victoria, Kurnai tribe), and on the north coast of New South Wales (Kumbaingeri tribe). In the latter district, after fasting and enduring privations for months, and even sleeping on a grave, the postulant was visited by the tribal Great-Spirit or Sky Culture-Hero, who put quartz-crystals in his inside. The account for the Port Jackson tribe, further south, suggests how this was done. The spirit of the deceased person seized the aspirant by the throat, made an incision, took out his intestines, which he "replaced," after which the wound closed up. Amongst the Yualai and Weilwan in north-western New South Wales, the main operation was also performed by a spirit (or ghost) at a burial ground. One of them drove a yam-stick right through the postulant's head, and placed in the hole a sacred stone-crystal, which is associated with the sky-hero. The power of the stone can also be obtained if it is swallowed or is rubbed into the postulant's or doctor's head.

In Eastern Queensland, spirits of the dead, nature spirits or the rainbow-serpent are the source of power, and play

an important part in the "making," but unfortunately, details of the ritual have not been recorded. Quartz crystals and magical cord are signs and means of the medicine-man's power, and in some parts at least, were carried in his inside, where they were put during the "making."

Thus, in Eastern Australia, magical substances and "agents" were inserted into the postulant either through an abdominal incision, or were rubbed or pressed, and "sung" into his body and limbs; or the quartz might be inserted in a hole made through his head. The operators were the spirits of the dead, the sky-culture hero, or other supernatural spirit or medicine-men. In some cases one of the last-named acted the part of the sky-hero. The operation or some significant part of the ritual was performed at a burial place. The purpose of this was not primarily to terrify and test the postulant, but to bring him into association with the spirits of the dead, whom in the future he would be able to see, consult, and summon to his aid. The ritual bestows powers to pass through the confines of death. But the central experience is usually interpreted or described as a trance, not a "death," whereas in the circumcision regions it is frequently referred to as the latter.

The interesting point, however, is that the same pattern of experience forms the central feature of the ritual of making medicine-men right across South Australia, into the Great Victoria Desert of Western Australia, and north through Central Australia to the south-west corner of the Gulf of Carpentaria, and also in some parts of the far north-west of the continent.

Circumcision Regions.

Amongst the Dieri, near Lake Eyre, a spirit makes an incision in the postulant's abdomen and inserts a spirit-

snake, his future "familiar." He also visits the sky, by means of a hair-cord. In the neighbouring Piladapa tribe, a spirit drives a "pointing-stick" into the back of the postulant's head, but the latter recovers, and receives power and quartz from the spirit. Included in his power is that of extracting a person's "insides."

In western South Australia, the postulant is put in a waterhole, where a mythical snake swallows him, but later ejects him in the form of a baby, on to a supposedly unknown place. After a long search, he is found by the doctors, and is restored to man's size by being sung in the midst of a circle of fires. After a period of seclusion and converse with spirits, he is red-ochred and treated as a corpse. Then the 'head doctor' ritually breaks his neck, wrists and other joints by marking them with a magic stone (australite). Into each mark (or cut), and also into his stomach, the doctor inserts *maban*, life-giving shell, after which the postulant is "sung" and revives, now full of power.

The description of the operation in the Mandjindja tribe, Warburton Ranges, Western Australia, adds the detail, that two totemic spirits or heroes "kill" the postulant, cut him open from his neck to his groin, take out all his "insides" and insert magical substances (*mabain*). They also take out his shoulder and thigh bones and insert *mabain*, before drying and putting them back. They treat the frontal bone in the same way, and also cut round the ankles and stuff *mabain* into those parts.

In Central and North-Central Australia, a similar experience must be endured. Spirits of the "eternal dream-time" or spirits of the dead, "kill" the postulant, and through an abdominal incision, remove his "insides," and substitute new ones together with some magical substances. If medicine men are the operators, the method is similar to that employed in the Wiradjeri and neighbouring tribes of western New South Wales. Crys-

tals, extracted from their own bodies, are pressed and scored and 'jerked' into the postulant's body. He is also given crystals in his food and drink. In addition, a hole is pierced in his tongue. In some accounts, however, the usual abdominal operation is said to be performed by the medicine-man and not by a spirit.

This ritual is interpreted by the members of the profession as a "death," during which the postulant is operated upon and receives additions to his "insides," and after which he is restored to life.

Light is thrown upon this by a Nyul-Nyul informant in north-west Australia, who apparently did not wish me to think that the postulants actually had their abdomens incised and cleaned out, and their old, or else new, insides and magical substances inserted, as other informants had assured me. He said this did not happen, but that the operator put a small snake and shell into the postulant while asleep.

Information for north-western Australia is meagre, but it is of interest because firstly, both in the Lagrange and Forrest River districts, the magical substances on which the doctor's power depends are called *maban*, the term used across the desert at the Warburton Ranges and down to Ooldea. Secondly, in these two districts, and in both East and North Kimberley generally, the medicine-man is made by, or receives his power from, the rainbow serpent, or else a water-snake, which can also be seen in the sky. And thirdly, in the Kimberley districts, as in the Warburton-Ooldea districts, a most important magical possession is associated with a mythical water-snake, who, in some accounts, is definitely the rainbow. The shell comes to the Great Victoria Desert region from the Kimberley coastal tribes.

At Lagrange and in East Kimberley, this mythical snake makes the 'doctor,' 'killing' him being the first step in the process. In the Northern Kimberley at Forrest River, an

old doctor takes the postulant, reduced to the size of a baby, to the sky either on a cord or on the rainbow, which serves as a rope. Reaching the sky, he throws him on to the sky-land, thus 'killing' him. He then inserts in him *maban* (quartz-crystals) and little rainbow-snakes, which he can obtain in a water-hole at the foot of the rainbow. Bringing the postulant back to earth, he inserts more *maban* into him through his navel, after which he wakes him up with a magical stone. The new doctor then learns how to use pearl-shell and other *maban*, and how to go to the sky and to see the spirits of the dead.

This association of the "making" with a water- or rainbow-snake and pearl-shell definitely connects the ritual in the Kimberleys with that in the Warburton-Ooldea region. The insertion of magical substances is, of course, an almost universal feature of the ritual, but the going to the sky-world both as part of, and as a result of, being 'made,' which is characteristic of East and North Kimberley, distinguishes it from the great central regions of the continent, though linking it with the south-eastern region. In the Kimberleys, the sky-world holds in Aboriginal belief almost the same importance as in south-east Australia. Great culture-heroes live up there, and so do the dead in some districts, as in East Kimberley, for the doctor can visit them by going up on a string. But at the same time, there are spirit-homes on earth, not only for pre-existent spirits, but also for those awaiting rebirth.

In Arnhem Land we pass to a slightly different world—one in which sorcerers practise soul-stealing.¹⁶ We do not know how these sorcerers are made, but there are medicine-men in the region, endowed with the usual curative, "divining," clairvoyant and thought-reading powers, and also with some control over the rain-making totemic python.

(16) This is done either by letting out the heart-blood, the soul escaping with this blood; or by causing the victim to take a deep breath which opens the heart, and lets the soul escape through the mouth. (See Chapter 4.)

The main objective of their "making" in North-East Arnhem Land is to obtain "familiar," who seem to be spirit-children with some bird-like characteristics. The aspirant to the profession must experience a vision of such "familiar" coming to and residing with him. Moreover, other doctors, and only doctors, can see these spirit-helpers. They must vouch that the new medicine-man has gained some, usually two, of them. Ordinary people are convinced by hearing their clicking sounds—a kind of beating of wings against the doctor's shoulders.

Sometimes, as in far western Queensland, the vision may include the unpleasant experience of being half-stunned and having pointed objects thrust in one's body, and of being thrown into a water-hole and dragged out when almost drowned, after which the magical objects are extracted, and the aspirant feels better again. This is followed by a visit to a cave of ghosts, "familiar" and a totem python. Some experiences of this type may be a feature of all "makings," but are seldom divulged.

Other medicine-men play an important part in the making and training of new practitioners in this region. But available information suggests that the gaining of the prescribed vision is essential. Anointing the body with a special preparation, sleeping in a solitary place, avoiding certain foods, and of course, accepting in earnest faith the tribal beliefs regarding spirit-familiar, are means to this end.

Amongst the Kakadu, the postulant was brought into sacramental relation with a rainbow-snake by being rubbed with, and drinking, some of the blood of its earthly snake representative. Afterwards, with the help of this rainbow-snake or one of its small earthly representatives, the doctor was able to rescue stolen souls.

The only other region for which any worth-while information is available is far-western Queensland. There, doctors are made by nature spirits who were probably

ghosts to begin with, or by a water-snake. The method seems to amount to a "killing" of the aspirant by "pointing" and projecting magical substances into his body. These are later removed. The individual has sought this experience by fasting and seclusion, and it seems certain that medicine-men play a part in the trance-experience. Indeed, if the trance does not come, the Maitakudi aspirant can be made by doctors of the Goa tribe. They "kill" him, throw him into a water-hole for four days and then take him out and dry him in a ring of fires, so "making him alright." In other words, he passes through a prescribed ritual, in which a water-snake figures. The "killing" is apparently effected by "pointing." We can be sure that only part of the making has been revealed.

To sum up the available evidence for South Australia, the neighbouring area of Western Australia, the Northern Territory, far-west Queensland, and the Kimberleys, the making of medicine-men is a transition rite which conforms to a traditional and significant pattern: (1) The postulant, who, of course, has been approved and accepted as a candidate, is "killed," usually by being "pointed" with a magical "death-bone"; in the south-western part of this great region, however, death comes through being swallowed by a great mythical water-snake, which, like the rainbow, can reach the sky. The "killing" and the swallowing are interpreted as a death by the doctors and by the members of the postulant's group. The latter mourn for him, and an old man or the doctors search for his body.¹⁷

(2) Operations are performed on the ritual 'corpse.' The abdominal incision is perhaps the most striking. But the temporary removal of the frontal bone and of the

(17) A human hair girdle is put round the postulant before he is thrown to the water-snake. In this part of the region, the final act of mourning is to throw a girdle made of the dead person's hair into one of the waters associated with this snake, who swallows it. A. P. Elkin, "Beliefs and Practices Connected with Death in North-eastern and Western South Australia," *Oceania*, Vol. VII, No. 3, pp. 289-91.

thigh bones should not be overlooked. Magical additions are made to the "insides," head, thigh bones and ankles and other joints.

Some descriptions refer to magical pressing and scoring of the body, head and limbs. Obviously, this is what actually occurs, even when major operations are described. The latter probably represent an esoteric interpretation. Moreover, the accounts of making by medicine-men in the western South Australian, and in the Kaitish and Waramunga tribes show that the initiating doctors do perform such major 'operations,' in ritual form.

An important feature of the operation is the cleaning of the bones, the replacement of the insides with new ones, and the addition of magical substances and agents: quartz or pearl-shell, spirit-snakes or other 'familiar.'s.

(3) Finally, the 'dead' person is restored to life—a man of power.

(4) During the 'making' and afterwards, the postulant is brought into contact with spirits and heroes of totemic significance, the spirits of the dead. The place of making is not a burial place. With the exception of the Dieri, the Binbinga and the Mara tribes, in the east of the region, and of some Kimberley tribes in the north-west, the 'doctors' do not go to the sky. Those in the south-east of the continent do visit this world above, because it is the abode of the great cult-heroes and of the spirits of the dead. Incidentally, their place of making is usually, at least partly, associated with a burial ground.

Two explanations can be given of this remarkable four-fold experience. According to the first, the postulant is so conditioned by instruction, by seclusion in suitable surroundings, and by fasting and ceremony, that he goes into a trance, and sees all the correct, the suggested and the expected happenings materialize. According to the second, after the conditioning by instruction, psychological

preparation and bodily ordeal, the 'killing,' surgical operations and restoration might, and in some cases do, occur in ritual manner, medicine-men acting the rôles of the great totemic spirits (or in the Mara tribe, of the sky-spirits). This is in keeping with the great part played by totemic ritual in the life of these tribes. Moreover, there is no doubt that in South-East Australia also, medicine-men acted the rôle of the sky-hero (*Baïame*, for example). The Wiradjeri and other accounts make this clear.

An interesting feature of the ritual operation is that in South-East Australia it is usually referred to as a trance experience, and this is implied for north-east Arnhem Land, whereas in the other regions, it is almost always referred to as a death, or "being killed," the postulant being mourned for, as one dead. Present information suggests a correlation of the emphasis on trance in south-east Australia with a greater development there than elsewhere of psychic practices, such as hypnotism, materialization and thought transference. This seems to be the case also in north-east Arnhem Land. Further inquiry, however, in other regions, may show that they are not exceptional in this regard.

A note. Another possible correlation, perhaps connected with this, is worth notice and further inquiry. The regions in which the "making" is referred to as a "death," belong almost wholly to the great fan-shaped circumcision-subincision area extending from the Kimberleys to the Roper River and far-western Queensland, down to Spencer's Gulf, along the Great Australian Bight and up to the Ninety-Mile Beach, south of Broome. In the initiation ceremonies in this area, circumcision is the main symbolic act of ritual death. Indeed, to initiate, is to 'kill,' signifying circumcision in particular, and in some parts of the area, the foreskin is disposed of according to the 'burial' practice of the tribes concerned. Subincision expresses sympathy and also ritual solidarity, and in one large region, at least, signifies "paying with a life."

On the other hand, the regions in which the most striking features of the "making" of medicine-men is de-

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scribed as a trance or other psychic experience, and not referred to as "death" or "being killed," are the uncircumcision regions. In most, if not all, of eastern Australia, initiation into tribal membership is termed "putting, or going, though the rule." In this region, too, medicine-men are the masters of the secret life and take the leading part in initiation, whereas in the circumcision regions, the headmen of the cult-totemic life, who are not necessarily medicine-men, fulfil both these rôles, and the main revelations consist of rites, myths and symbols of the totemic heroes of the "eternal dream time."

In other words, where tribal initiation includes circumcision and subincision, and the headmen of the totemic "cult-lodges" are masters of the ritual, the "making" of medicine-men is commonly referred to as a killing or death; whereas in the uncircumcision regions, where the "clever-men" are the masters, and the emphasis is on "going through the rule," and, incidentally, being brought into relationship with the sky-world and its cult-hero, the crucial experience of the "doctor"-postulant is thought of as a trance or psychic experience.

North-East Arnhem Land tribes, however, whose rites for the "making" of medicine-men are referred to explicitly in psychic terms, as a vision or dream, practise circumcision, and so are an exception to the above generalisation. But like a number of other tribes on the margin of the circumcision area, they do not practise subincision, or else, do not make it compulsory. The distribution of these rites suggests that there has been and is a time-lag between the adoption of the two, and that a tribe which only possesses the former has only done so for a comparatively short time. If so, this would mean that the significance of the circumcision rite has not yet affected the interpretation of the ritual of "making" in North-East Arnhem Land.

Likewise, the Piladapa and Ngaduri of South Australia, who are in the circumcision area but do not practise subincision, and the Dieri, who are just within the subincision boundary, belong, according to the available accounts, to the strongly developed psychic south-east region. (See Chapter iv.) Whether or not a longer experience of the myths and rituals of circumcision and subincision would have modified the interpretation of the medicine-man "making" in these tribes, cannot now be determined.

The above is merely a suggestion which must be examined more thoroughly. In particular, a study should be made, as soon as possible, of medicine-men and their powers in those parts of the circumcision-subincision area, where the opportunity still remains.

Distribution of "abdominal operation."

A survey of the continent reveals that the abdominal operation for the purpose of inserting magical paraphernalia and/or new insides as part of a ritual of death and restoration, is recorded for the south-east (Victoria and Port Jackson), a large region covering northern and western South Australia, the neighbouring area of Western Australia, Central and North Central Australia, and Dampier Land in the far north-west. In some cases, incisions are made in other parts of the body for the same purpose.

Closely related to this, and as part of a similar death and restoration rite, is the insertion of magical paraphernalia into the postulant's abdomen, head and limbs, without definite mention of abdominal or other incisions—the latter being the esoteric interpretation of the former. This is recorded from western New South Wales, far western Queensland, and the Kimberley Division (north-western Australia).

Mummification Pattern of Ritual.

Since the making of medicine-men is a transition rite, it is not surprising to find it follows a death and a restoration to life pattern, modelled on the most decisive of all human experiences—death itself. As I have pointed out elsewhere,¹⁸ if the ritual concerned with an actual corpse, consisted of (1) the making of an abdominal and other incisions; (2) the removal, cleaning and replacing of the internal organs; (3) the addition of magical or life-giving substances; (4) the closing of the incisions; and (5) a ritual "raising" of the body to life, we would call the process one of mummification. We would be all the

(18) A. P. Elkin, *The Australian Aborigines*, pp. 227-8 and 249. *Ibid*, "Primitive Medicine Men," *The Medical Journal of Australia*, Nov. 30, 1935, p. 756.

more justified in doing this, seeing that the postulant's body is usually specially prepared, for example, by being anointed with red ochre, and in some cases, by being seeped in water for a period, and then dried amidst fires, and that as a result of the ritual, the person is like a member of the ghostly world. He can visit and converse with the departed, and traverse in body and mind through space and time, without hindrance. In other words, his body is believed to become what the Egyptians said the ritually mummified corpse had become, a Zed, a living body.

Origin of the Ritual.

But whence came this ritual into Australia? Did it come with the diffusion of the profession of medicine-men and of certain forms of magic into the continent? This is possible, for esoteric rites do spread from people to people. Or was it built up in Australia on the basis of an actual burial rite which was performed there, whether introduced or evolved locally?

No definite answer can be given, but it is suggestive that in Eastern Australia from Cape York Peninsula down Eastern Queensland and the Darling River to the mouth of the River Murray and parts of Victoria, a form of mummification burial ritual was practised, though usually only in the case of important men and 'doctors.' This ritual varies slightly along its two thousand miles of distribution, but it follows a general pattern; (1) the preparation of the body by removing the intestines and stomach temporarily or altogether through an abdominal incision, and sometimes by removing the outer skin; in one North Queensland rite, incisions are also made in the shoulders, lungs, and filled with stones. The body is then bound up and usually painted and dried in the sun or over a fire. (2) It is then made up into a bundle, the "mummy,"

which is carried around by the mourners until their grief is assuaged and/or revenge has been taken. (3) It is finally disposed of by interment, cremation or exposure.^{18a}

There seems little or no reason for doubting that this ritual was introduced into Australia by way of the Torres Straits Islands, where a type of mummification was practised.¹⁹ It is, therefore, possible, if not probable, that the ritual for the making of medicine-men was based on it and diffused right across Australia. It is unfortunate that we have no information regarding this ritual for north and east Queensland, but whatever it was there, the spread of the ritual, of which we have knowledge, could have been from the Darling River region to the Cooper's Creek region, and so to Central and Northern, and North-Western Australia. The Molonga ceremony was diffused in these directions, and so too was the matrilineal dual organization, as far as it went.²⁰ In any case, a secret ritual of this type spreads very much more quickly and widely than does a new burial ritual; for the latter is public and may run counter to current attitudes and beliefs. The Australian origin of the ritual of "making," however, is only conjecture, and as already suggested, it may have been introduced. If so, this may have been either from the north-west, or from the north-east.

(18a) See footnote 18, p. 39.

(19) W. R. Dawson, "Mummification in Australia and in America," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. LVIII (1928), pp. 115-121. Also, Ursula H. McConnel, "Mourning Ritual Among the Tribes of Cape York Peninsula," *Oceania*, Vol. VII, No. 3, p. 350. See also A. P. Elkin, "Ritual Distribution in Australia," *Oceania*, Vol. XVI, No. 1, pp. 1-ff.

(20) For the Molonga see A. W. Howitt, *N.T.S.E.A.*, p. 330. W. E. Roth, *Ethnol. Studies*, pp. 117-118; B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *Wanderings in Wild Australia*, Vol. 1 pp. 237-38; A. P. Elkin, *Field Notes*, also *The Australian Aborigines*, p. 208 (Plate). I saw parts of the Molonga ceremony at Horseshoe Bend (Aranda tribe) in 1930.

A survey of the distribution of the matrilineal dual organization (Queensland, south of the Gulf of Carpentaria; western New South Wales and Victoria, and eastern South Australia to Eyre's Peninsula, except the Lower Murray) and an examination of the mythology shows that this cultural trait was diffused in a southern and south-western direction. See A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Social Organization of Australian Tribes*, *Oceania Monograph*, No. 1, pp. 48-70, and map p. 10; A. P. Elkin, "The Social Organization of South Australian Tribes," *Oceania*, Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 52-3.

Medicine-Men Making, a Pre-enactment of Magical Killing.

One important aspect of the ritual of making medicine-men is that in most areas the ritual killing and operation are a pre-enactment of the magical killing which occurs in those areas, and which the postulant, if he chooses to practise sorcery, will later be able to perform. In the first place, in every region the doctor's power depends partly on magical substances, such as quartz, shells, "stones," bones and "snakes," which are put into him during the ritual. But any of these objects, magically projected by him into another person, may be agents of sickness and death as well as of life. In his case, however, he is given the power to control them within his own body, and to make them pass in or out at will. They are to him sources of power, not of death.

In the second place, in many of the rites the postulant is "killed" by being "pointed" with a death-bone or by having magical objects projected into him. He is later revived by having these things withdrawn by the methods he will later use.²¹

In the third place, the ritual abdominal incision can be correlated with the practice of the taking of the kidney or caul-fat in South-East Australia and parts of North-West Australia, and with *kadaitja* in Central Australia and western South Australia. In *kadaitja*, a medicine-man heals the wound made by a magical spearing after having inserted in the victim's inside something of magical power, such as a spirit-snake. No mark is left. In both these practices the victim revives and feels quite well, but in about three days sickens and dies.²²

(21) Chapters III and IV.

(22) For *kadaitja*, see A. P. Elkin, *The Australian Aborigines*, pp. 208-210; Spencer and Gillen, *Nat. T.C.A.*, pp. 476-85. For fat-taking, see A. P. Elkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-5, 229; and below Chapters III and IV.

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Another example of this ritual experience of a magical death, as a pre-enactment of what the postulant can later do, comes from Central Australia. In one method of making, the spirits throw an invisible lance which pierces the postulant's neck from behind, making a large hole, and coming out through the mouth. A second lance pierces his head from ear to ear. Sometimes magical stones are thrown so as to penetrate the head in this way. Incidentally, medicine-men have a large hole pierced in their tongue. And away to the south-west in the Great Victoria Desert, a cause of death is to "choke" the victim by pushing an invisible "stick" through his collar-bone, neck and tongue, and by inserting little stones and arm-blood in his ears.

These facts illustrate the general principle that ritual is a pre-enactment of some experience or condition which is desired for the future. The doctor must pass through the experience of being magically killed and raised, before he can either "kill" others, or "raise," that is, cure them. The ritual is also a re-enactment of what has occurred in the past, generally to a cult-hero. If this is not always clear, at least, supernatural beings, dream-time or sky heroes, or spirits of the dead, are regarded as the operators, that is, the masters of the craft. They are the "doctors," who control magic and death.

Medicine-Man's Power Supernatural.

Training in his craft is necessary for the medicine-man, but this only teaches him how to prepare to receive, and how to use, the power to which time, space, matter and death are subject. This power exists because the Sky-Culture Heroes and the eternal dream-time ancestors and heroes have shown that they possess it. The object of the ritual is to receive it from the heroes, from the historic

source of the cult and through an unbroken channel. This is done by being magically and ritually treated by them, either in trance and vision, or by doctors representing them, or in both ways. So in the South-East, the postulants are taken to Baiame in the sky or in a prepared spot; or here and in the north and far north-west, they go to the sky. In the central regions they are operated on by Dream-time heroes, and in south-east and far-western Queensland, in the Murray River district in western South Australia, in the Kimberleys, and in parts of Arnhem Land, they receive power from the Rainbow, or other water, Serpent, who is usually connected with the sky.

Moreover, the power is received in symbolic and indeed sacramental forms which come from the heroic beings. In Eastern Australia, and in the far north-west, quartz is such a symbol; it is "living," and is connected with the sky-world and with the rainbow, at the foot of which it may be obtained.

In Central and North-Central Australia, quartz crystals are also the doctor's most potent medium, but what might be called their sacramental and theological nature has not been described for us.

In the western part of the continent, pearl-shell is the most important medium of power. Like quartz, it is also connected with the rainbow-serpent; and in both cases one reason might well lie in their reproduction of the colours of the rainbow, which might seem to be magical. In any case, the rainbow connects them both with the sky.

Spirit-snakes, and other 'familiar' of totemic and dream-time associations, are also sacramental links with the world of heroes and creative power.

This world is believed to be the source of life in man and nature, and all fully initiated men are links with it. But only men of high degree, men who in their special

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initiation have been admitted to this world in the sky and on earth—only these men can exercise that power to prevent death, to restore life, to recapture the soul, to converse with the dead, and to understand in some real measure the workings of the human mind.

Chapter II

THE POWERS OF MEDICINE-MEN

Supernormal Powers.

The powers of medicine-men are *supernormal*, usually supersensory, and are derived from two sources; first, the cult-heroes of the "craft"—sky and totemic heroes, spirits and ghosts, who may be all one. The second source is the long line and hierarchy or order of medicine-men, which leads back to these same heroes of the eternal dream-time.

Some doctors are also leeches, diagnosing illness and applying tribal remedies, and to this day faith in their treatment is great. Their special curative function, however, goes beyond this. They are concerned with the animistic, the magical and the super-ordinary causes of illness and death. These cases, however, are not abnormal to the Aborigines, even though they are to us. They are normal, but in a sphere of the normal with which only a class of specialists can deal—men with special training and power; men who have been initiated into that sphere—men of *high degree*.

Medicine-men's powers enable them to do many supernormal things, but they are all psychical in character. Healing or killing (by sorcery), "divining" a murderer, practising hypnotism, telepathy, telaesthesia and clairvoyance, holding séances or visiting the sky—all these depend on the psychic training and faculties of the medicine-man and the induction of the right state of receptivity (acceptivity, as it is called by Baudouin¹) in the minds of the

(1) C. Baudouin, *Suggestion and Auto-suggestion* (1922), p. 244.

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patient, victim, mourners, dreamers, or audience at a ceremony.

SORCERY AND ITS CURE

Sorcery—an Explanation of Illness and Death.

Sorcery or black magic provides the explanation of illnesses, pains and deaths, the causes of which are not known, or are not obvious. The explanation is personal or spiritistic. Someone or some spiritual powers performed black magic because ill-disposed to the victim, or because the latter broke some taboo. But being personal or animistic, it can be dealt with by the specialist, and either health can be restored to the individual, or at least, equilibrium can be regained by the group. Not to know the causes of illness and death of tribesmen, by which the solidarity and efficiency of the community are weakened, is a disturbing factor in psychological and social life, but to have an accepted explanation and to have acted on that explanation, enables the community to readjust itself to events and to go about its business.

Thus the bone, the quartz or other stone, or the bad-blood is magically extracted, or the wandering soul is brought back, and all is well. Or if this cannot be done, the victim and his group are prepared for the death of the former, and attention is paid to the inquest and revenge.

In many tribes, any person may learn to work some forms of black magic; and in many, too, medicine-men can work serious and death-dealing forms of it, though such men seldom do so. In a few tribes only, are there any self-confessed sorcerers. This last is a risky profession, even though its members may gather some sense of pride from their prowess. In some cases of sorcery they have not acted at all, although the illness is attributed to them. Possibly, however, they eventually believe that they did exercise malign power, even in these cases.

Psychic aspect of pointing and of other forms of sorcery.

The important aspect of the potent forms of sorcery is that, whatever be the "implement" used (pointing bone or other), and whatever be the traditional form of words or spell employed, the performer must concentrate his thoughts on the victim; he must visualize him, and transmit to him the thought of illness or death, of having a "bone" in his inside, or of having his kidney fat stolen. Using the traditional mechanism in the prescribed way and saying the prescribed words, in a quiet undertone, helps in this concentration and direction of the mind. But this is not enough. The rite is not mechanical and external. It is psychic. This explains why the performer must observe taboos on his conduct and prepare himself for his task.

Whether the unseen and distant magical rite alone causes illness and death has yet to be proved, but certainly, once the intended victim knows that he has been pointed, he will sicken and die, unless cured by a medicine-man. Generally, however, in my opinion, the belief that one has been pointed follows the oncoming of certain pains and illnesses. The patient may, in a dream, see himself being pointed and "sung," no doubt the result of pondering on his condition. In any case, it provides the explanation and also a possibility of recovery.

The "Doctor" and the "Patient."

In diagnosis and treatment, the doctor, working against a common background of faith, and of accepted explanation and methods, directs his efforts to dealing with the unseen, animistic and psychic causes of illness and death. His paraphernalia of quartz, and other stones, of shell, spirit-snakes and other "familiar" are all aids to himself and his patient. Concentrating on his task, softly chant-

ing his words of power, rubbing, sucking and all the rest of it are the sacramental forms—the means by which the doctor exercises his magical and psychic power and extracts and casts away the badness.

The patient, for his part, is in a condition of receptivity, of high suggestibility, of contention (as Baudouin says), and is ready to realize the idea suggested by the doctor's actions, by the objects he exhibits, and by his attitude of authority and certainty: the idea, namely, that the immediate cause of the illness has been removed, and that therefore he can recover. If, however, the doctor assures him and his people that he (the doctor) cannot extract the cause, or cannot bring back the wandering soul, then the patient likewise accepts the suggestion—the suggestion of death. He "turns his face to the wall," thinks of the spirits of the departed, and before long, joins them.

The following is the treatment of a man who believes himself "pointed," and who, as a result, has a dream or vision confirming this. The medicine-man shows the patient a bunch of feathers and then goes to the door of the patient's wurley, where he sits quietly gazing at the sick man's body. Presently he closes his eyes, as though shutting out an evil vision, and professes to speak with the patient's departed relatives. He then gives the patient two feathers, and tells him to place them in front of his eyes and look through them at his, the doctor's body. The patient is startled, because the doctor's body appears to be transparent. And when asked what he sees, he says to the medicine-man: "It seems that your flesh has disappeared, and that I am able to see your spirit-man."

The doctor then removes the feathers from the sick man's eyes, and at the same time enjoins him to close his eyes. He emphasizes his power to give or take life, but adds that he is having a difficult time because the sick man's departed relations want him to join them in the

spirit world. Indeed, they are beside him now, pleading with the doctor in spirit-language to allow the patient to pass over. Then, placing two feathers in front of his own eyes, the doctor looks through them into the body of the patient, and with a few "passes" of his hand across the latter, produces a broken stick. He explains that the sick man's departed relatives have prevented him extracting the whole stick, and that therefore nothing more can be done.

The medicine-man sits quietly watching the patient. He cries and bids the latter farewell. Then the relatives and friends come in and tell the sick man that he must resign himself to the wishes of the departed ones. "So he turns to the west and allows his spirit to take flight." He dies by suggestion, as Aborigines can, and as so many do.²

In this case, we see all the conditions present, and methods used, which are considered essential for making suggestion effective. The patient is in an "acceptive" condition, with voluntary effort annulled and the associative process in abeyance. He is convinced that he has been 'pointed,' and believes absolutely that his living or dying depends solely on the medicine-man.

The latter, on this basis, adopts an almost hypnotic attitude and approach, so that the patient becomes even more "acceptive" to his idea. He gazes at him silently, after drawing attention to his presence by showing him the feathers—a sign of magical power. He speaks to the spirits and so creates atmosphere, and then gets the patient to gaze through the feathers at his, the doctor's body, and to see only the latter's "spirit-man."

The patient is now ready to receive the suggestion—in

(2) W. Ramsay Smith, *Myths and Legends of the Australian Aborigines*, pp. 186-9. This general description is for the Yarlde and other groups of the Lower Murray River, South Australia. Dr. Smith records it under the heading *Neilyeri*. Taplin (in *N.T.S.A.*, pp. 29-31), however, describes this as a deadly poisonous implement, with which a victim is pricked.

this case, death. Being told to close his eyes, he hears the doctor's quiet but authoritative voice, leading up to the suggestion that the spirits have prevented a cure because they want the patient to join them. And he does.

In cases of serious illness, especially if experience has shown that there is hope of recovery from the particular type of illness, the doctor's task is a much more vigorous one. The diagnosis may require much time and also consultation with fellow practitioners, and with relatives of the patient. Of course, everyone is very solemn, and the conversation is subdued. But when the cause has been determined, the patient is supported in a half-sitting attitude, with the medicine-man standing close-by, gazing upon him most intently. Suddenly he goes some yards off, and looking fiercely at him, bends slightly forward and repeatedly jerks his arm outwards at full length, with the hand outstretched, to project magical stones into the patient's body. Then, going rapidly, and with characteristic high knee action from one end of the cleared space to the other, he repeats the movements with dramatic action. Finally, he comes to the patient, and by much mysterious searching finds the magical material cause of the illness, sucks it out, and displays it to all around.³

There is no doubt that such an energetic and dramatic performance on his behalf must lift the patient's thoughts away from his trouble, and prepare him for the suggested idea of recovery—the manifestation of the bone. It is just as clear that the medicine-man must exercise much concentration of thought, and throw himself, mind and body, into the performance, because he must extract the illness along with the magic bone or stone; he must convince the patient that he will recover or else his own reputation will be lowered, or at least, not enhanced. What is more, failure might prove that he has lost his magical power.

(3) Spencer and Gillen, *Nat. T.C.A.*, pp. 531-2.

Thought Transference.

I have suggested that the use of the pointing bone and of other forms of projective magic imply a belief that a person can send his thought through space, and also his visualization of the condition he wishes to produce. But this demands much effort and concentration. Mrs. Verrall, the famous sensitive, said, "All who have tried to convey an idea by thought transference must be familiar with the sensation that after a special effort, the thought has been actually projected into space, leaving one fatigued and conscious of loss."⁴

An Aboriginal medicine-man, a friend of mine, years before I read this, impressed on me what hard work and effort were entailed in putting one's thoughts into the mind of a person at a distance and causing the latter to act upon them. He assured me that he could do it, and had done so.

A person who has this faculty can use it for good or ill. Thus, in the Lower Murray River region, the *ngathungi* is a very potent form of "pointing bone." It consists of a stick to which is fastened an object which has been in contact with the victim, especially the remnant of a meal. "The person who operates it, however, must be an expert. He must possess the power of concentration and of communicating without physical means or agency; he must also be a person with a good many years of training."

When using this magical implement, the operator takes it in his left hand, and says very softly, "Shooh ho! Let the breath leave thy body, O boy!" Then he chants a song of hate for an hour or more, after which he warms part of the *ngathungi*, concentrates his mind until he sees a picture of his victim, and then with all the emotion

(4) G. N. M. Tyrrell, *Science and Psychical Phenomena* (1938), p. 63.

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and energy he can summon, he whispers "Die!" He lies down for an hour, no doubt gathering fresh psychic strength, and then repeats this performance several times, each time whispering: "Let the life-breath leave thy body, O boy! Die!" In fact, he keeps the mental picture of his victim before him all night. Finally, in the early morning, he performs similarly, but this time as close as possible to the victim, provided the latter is asleep.⁵

This performance shows that the ritual use of what might be called a contagious implement of magic does not automatically produce the desired result. The operator must not only use the appropriate object in the correct way and say the prescribed words. He must also throw himself into the rite, not vociferously, but through psychic concentration and direction. The belief in the certainty of the result is a good example of man's belief in the omnipotence of thought.⁶ At least, he realizes that he must "see" the victim, visualize the desired result, and send his thought to attain it. Usually a pointing-bone only symbolizes and helps to transmit the thought of death; ideally, it is a bone from a dead person. But in this case, in which contagious magic enters, the "bone" or other implement may also help the performer call up the picture of his victim.

Psychical research is now suggesting that the holding of an article which had been in the possession of, or in contact with, an absent person, puts the "sensitive" en rapport with such subject, and then she (or he) can read the latter's mind.⁷ It is not suggested that it enables such "sensitive" to affect, or transfer thoughts to, the latter,

(5) W. Ramsay Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-5. G. Taplin (in *N.T.S.A.*, pp. 23-6), gives only a superficial account of this form of "pointing." I have referred to the qualifications required by a person desirous of using special pointing-bones, in *The Australian Aborigines*, pp. 207-8.

(6) S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, Ch. III.

(7) G. N. M. Tyrrell, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-5.

but at least it does suggest that a sorcerer endowed with his super-normal faculty could be helped by the use of a "contagious" element.

While referring to the possible practice of telepathy amongst the Aborigines, mention might be made of the following type of occurrence, which I have observed. A native is asked to obtain some information from another native who is sitting down a half-mile or more away. The former does not shout out to draw the other man's attention, as we would probably do. He just utters a quiet, fairly long-drawn note, and soon the distant man gets up and turns round. It hardly seems possible that the call could have been heard, but, of course, the Aborigines are probably accustomed and attuned to hear much quieter noises than we are. So there may be nothing mysterious about it.

Then, without raising his voice, and saying very little, and with the use of a few signs between the two men, the information is gathered. These two men have a background of experience and knowledge, which enables them to dispense with much talking and noise.

All cases, however, are not so easy to explain as this. A recent research-worker has obtained texts in the native language of the Lower Murray River people, concerning their psychic life, which are somewhat startling.⁸

Here is one case, given in free translation:

"When a man is down on the plain and I am on the hill, I look towards him while I am talking. He sees me and turns towards me. I say, 'Do you hear?' I move my head from side to side glaring at him, and at last stare at him, and then, turning, I say, 'Come on quickly.' As I stare at him fixedly, I see him turn as he feels my stare.

(8) R. M. Berndt. This and other texts, with literal translations and notes, will be published later.

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He then turns and looks about while I continue staring at him. So I say, 'Walk this way, right along here, where I am sitting.' Then he walks right up to me where I am sitting behind a bush. I draw him with my 'power' (*miwi*). You do not see any hand-signs or hear any shouting. At last he comes up and nearly falls over me. I call out so that he will see me. He says: 'You talked to me and I felt it. How did you talk so?' I explain, and he adds: 'I felt your words while you were talking to me, and then I feel that you are there.' I answer: 'True, it was in that way that I talked to you, and you felt those words and also that power.'"⁹

"Clever men" in other tribes claim to be able to exert this power.

It can also be used to divert sorcerers from their evil intention. I quote a free translation of a text from the same area. When the "clever man" sees the two sorcerers going out to practise *milin* (bruising), he gazes (or concentrates) in such a way as to make their nerves cold (dead). When you see a clever man, his small eyes and your eyes meet and hold each other. He holds the sorcerers in this way, when he talks to them. They "feel" (but do not hear) his words, because their nerves are deadened. He makes them walk away from him, by exerting the strong "power" in his nerves, which begin to twitch. The men, under the influence of his gaze, weaken, and become as if asleep, and so when he says, "Go on, you! Walk down to the camp," they go. He tells them further: "Don't get up with the intention of performing sorcery." So they lie down and get up in the morning good (i.e., rid of the idea of performing sorcery). And, concludes the clever man, "That is the way some of us talk."

This seems to be a case of hypnotic influence, although

(9) Power, or *miwi*, will be discussed later.

ABORIGINAL MEN OF HIGH DEGREE

the men's minds (subconscious, probably) had first to be drawn to the clever man, and put en rapport with him. His narrow eyes and his gaze, together with their belief that he would know the anti-social nature of what they purposed doing, would no doubt do the latter.

CLAIRVOYANCE AND MIND-READING

Our medicine-men claim not only to be able to influence people who are at a distance, that is, to practise telepathy. They also assert that they can see or ascertain by invisible means what is happening at a distance, and in some cases, to tell what another person is thinking.

"Sometimes," said Willidjungo, a Murngin medicine-man, to Dr. Warner, "I am sitting with a man and I look at his head and I can say to him, 'You think so and so.' The man says, 'How do you know that?' And I say, 'I can see inside your mind.'" ¹⁰

One purpose of pressing or scoring magical substances (quartz, pearl-shell, etcetera) into a postulant's forehead is to enable him to see into, and through everything. ¹¹

Various methods are used for learning what is occurring at a distance. A usual method, or explanation, is that the medicine-man sends his 'familiar' (his assistant totem, spirit-dog, spirit-child, or whatever the form be) to gather the information. While this is occurring, the man himself is in a state of receptivity, sleep or trance. In modern phraseology, his "familiar spirit" would be the control, or on the other hand, the medicine-man may be "sensitive" to thoughts of other peoples minds. He is indeed able, once he can get en rapport with, or visualize, them, to ransack their minds—a process termed telaesthesia, and

(10) W. L. Warner, *A Black Civilization*, p. 214.

(11) See, for example, the Wiradjeri, Kakadu, Mandjindja and Aluridja; Chapters III and IV.

not confined to ransacking the mind as it is at the time of inquiry, but also as it was in the past.¹²

Related to this is the "clever man's" power (as I recently learnt in north-west New South Wales, Kamilaroi and other tribes) of seeing in quartz crystal and glass-like stones what people are, or have been, doing, especially if contrary to social standards. Possibly the "clever man" has heard something before reading the crystal.

In many tribes, especially in the South-East, the medicine-men "can fly" through space and see what is occurring elsewhere. They might produce magical cord or familiars and travel on or in them, or they might pass through the air without such accessories. Normally, however, their bodies do not take part in these journeys; only their spirits. Indeed, their bodies are sometimes asleep.

A Nyul-Nyul informant told me how he doubted the claim of a medicine-man to gain such information, so to test him, asked him to ascertain when his (the questioner's) white employer was returning. He said that neither he nor the medicine-man knew this. The latter went off a short distance and sat under a tree with the moonlight playing through the leaves, and produced his "spirit-dogs," which he, the questioner, actually saw. The medicine-man sent these familiars on their errand, and some little time later told him that as dawn came next morning he would hear the sound of his employer's horse approaching. Sure enough, this came to pass, confounding the unbelief of my informant.

Amongst the Wiradjeri (New South Wales), when the doctor lay down to rest, he would send his "familiar" (assistant totem) to other camps, irrespective of distance, to gain information of advantage to his own group. To do this, he would have to 'sing,' or 'hum,' or 'think,' his spirit out. He would often do this as he was dropping

(12) G. N. M. Tyrrell, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

off to sleep. It has to be remembered that the distinction between the mind of the spirit-familiar and of the medicine-man was only logical. The mind of one was the mind of the other. The spirit-familiar was an externalization of the man's spirit.

In such cases as the above, the medicine-man seeks the distant information, and does so through some psychic method while awake, or while in a "pre-controlled" dream. But he is also capable of what we might call "picking-up" information, as though thought-waves and picture-waves (television) were coming through space and the trained medicine-men were sensitive to them. The point to remember is that medicine-men who specialize in such psychic practices, claim that they are sensitive in this way, and tribesmen are satisfied with the results. Even when engaged in ordinary mundane affairs, they are on the alert to feel and notice psychic intimations, but in any case, from time to time they draw apart in mind, and let the thoughts and impressions come.

One day a whole camp of Wiradjeri people was preparing and having their late afternoon meal, the result of the day's hunting. Two old medicine-men were present, one lying down thinking, the other standing up. Suddenly the former jumped up and called out: "There is a mob coming to kill us, you had better all get together and get away!" and he pointed in the direction from which the attack would come. At about sun-down all set out, the men fully armed; well, all except one old man who was sceptical, even when the "clever man" explained that he had seen it "in a vision." This old man changed his mind later and followed. The two "doctors," by certain magical, or mass hypnotic performances, caused the attackers to return to their own country.¹³

Many examples could be given of medicine-men inform-

(13) From a special report made by Mr. R. M. Berndt. The doctor who had the vision was the grandfather of Mr. Berndt's informant.

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ing their people of the approach of friends or enemies, and of what is happening at a distance.¹⁴

THE STRONG EYE

The Medicine-man as "Detective" and Coroner.

An important faculty which the "clever-men" possess, and which is assiduously trained, is "the strong eye." This means not so much the power of looking into another person's mind, as the power of looking into and through a sick person's body to see whether the soul is present or not, and also of being able to see the spirit of a "murderer" and even the spirits of the dead. In short, to possess the "strong eye" is to have the faculty of seeing spirits, of the living and of the dead.

In regions where soul-stealing or soul-wandering is a likely cause of illness, the diagnostician must have this power; and having seen that the patient's "vital" spirit (or principle) is missing, he must recover it. Prescribed actions and words convince the patient that the soul has been restored. He recovers.

Social sickness is fraught with as serious consequences as the illness of an individual. Indeed, it may be more disastrous, because it can quickly cause disintegration of the whole group. This occurs when the serious illness, and especially, the death of an individual is believed to be caused by sorcery. In the former case, the effects of the sorcery must be neutralized. In the second, the "murderer" must be detected and revenge taken. In our own society, we may compare the socio-psychological effects of the appearance of a serious sickness of epidemic possibilities, and the efforts to isolate and get rid of it.

In Aboriginal society, the medicine-man, the man of

(14) For examples of clairvoyance and such like, see W. L. Warner, *op. cit.*, p. 215; T. T. Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 339; A. P. Elkin, "Notes on the Psychic Life of the Australian Aborigines," *Mankind*, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 49-56. Also unpublished field-notes, Weilwan and Kamilaroi Clever-men, 1944.

high degree, is the detective and coroner. Many methods are used; for example, the ground around the place of burial is inspected for marks showing the direction of the murderer's country; the exudations, bones, hair or body of the dead person are examined or "asked" for a prescribed sign, the sign varying in different regions.¹⁵

In interpreting the signs and information, the coroner uses his general knowledge and careful observation. But the methods may be grouped into three classes. In the first, the departed person's spirit animates or guides the corpse, hair, bones or exudations; the coroner need not see the spirit. In the other two classes, he must have the "strong eye," for he either sees the spirit of the dead person hanging around the murderer, or else he sees the latter's spirit hanging around the corpse, bones, or burial place of his victim. In exercising this strong sight, the medicine-man may examine the corpse or burial place in some prescribed way, or he may gaze through the smoke of a ritual fire at a group which includes a likely sorcerer. But whatever be the method, underlying it are the psychological facts that a murderer does sometimes feel the presence of his victim following him in an uncomfortable manner, and that a murderer sometimes feels constrained to revisit the scene of his crime.¹⁶

There is, however, another way in which a "clever-man" uses the "strong eye" to discover the murderer—a way which is more psychical than the preceding. But only some medicine-men practise it, for it involves clairvoyance. These men are usually known by a special term. One of them, a Murngin man, described his power by saying that he knew what had happened, whereas ordinary men could only *think* about it.

An interesting example comes from the Lower Murray

(15) A. P. Elkin, *The Australian Aborigines*, pp. 238-44.

(16) H. M. Moran, *Viewless Winds*, p. 241. Dr. Howitt (*N.T.S.E.A.*, p 371) refers to the belief that the "fat-taker" watches at the scene of the murder.

region, where one of the worst forms of sorcery is fat-taking with the aid of a *thumi*. This is a long rope of human hair, into which the strength of dying and dead persons has been made to pass, by having been wound round them. Operators, twelve in number, using this rope, wind it round their intended victim's body while he is asleep. They then hold the rope and all transmit the one suggestion to him, as a result of which he comes to them, so that they can extract his fat without leaving a mark. He revives, but later feels uneasy and ill, and suspects sorcery. His brother knows what has happened, and sends for the specialist (*munkumbole*), for the usual healer fails. The specialist not only announces who took the fat, but also describes every detail of the preliminary reconnoitring and everything else. He says he can see all this in a vision.¹⁷

These "coronial" decisions raise a difficult problem, because in many, if not in most, cases, it is probable that no one practised any sorcery; there is no psychical reason, therefore, for any "murderer's" spirit to hang round the corpse, or for the spirit of the latter to hang around the former, supposing such phenomena did occur. Moreover, it is probably stretching things too far to say that the death of a person, causing uneasiness in the mind of one who had wished the former's death but had suppressed the wish, results in the materialization of his personality attaching itself to the corpse or vice versa.

There is, however, the possibility that the coroner makes his decision in logical manner on the basis of his wide knowledge of his fellows, and then either manipulates the accepted methods of divination or else exercises psychic control over them and/or "sees" the spirit of the murderer or the murdered, as the case may be. The latter interpretation can be tentatively accepted, for it accords with the

(17) W. Ramsay Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 191, 198-200. Strangely enough, the specialist says that the stricken man's elder brother can see this vision, but cannot tell anyone about it.

animistic and spiritistic view of life and death, and of human relations, which is accepted by all—including men of high degree.

It is even possible to attribute honesty to the *thumi* fat-takers of the Lower Murray. The group of selected men led by a medicine-man, a psychic expert, visualize the body of the victim; indeed, they give it a pseudo-material form which they draw to their laps, and on which they operate for the kidney-fat, a cult-heroine closing the incision. Having passed through a ritual which directed their thoughts on their victim, and holding the rope of human hair, reinforced by spirits of the dead, they would be in a condition of acceptivity and ready to work out the leader's suggestion in trance. But that is not all; the Aborigines of the south-west New South Wales and the Lower Murray maintain not only that they can remove the kidney-fat of, or otherwise injure a person's spirit-form, but also that this causes a corresponding effect on the material body of the victim.¹⁸

PSYCHIC DISPLAYS

Many of the manifestations of psychic powers are for practical ends, to cure the sick, detect the sorcerer, gather information of social importance, visit the sky to release water stored there and so make rain, to influence people at a distance and to protect their group. But in addition, these specialists occasionally give displays of their power

- (18) This is inherent in the totemic conception of (a) the totem being the flesh of the totemite, and (b) of the (or a) totem representing the totemite in dreams and visions. The appearance of the totem in special or untoward circumstances is associated with the presence of the spirit-form of the person represented by the totem. To injure the totem is to injure the totemite; and this can be done in dream and vision even more efficiently than in daily life. Spencer and Gillen, *The Arunta*, Vol. I, p. 80, "The totem of any man is regarded . . . as the same thing as himself."
A. P. Elkin, *The Australian Aborigines*, pp. 145-6, 148.
A. W. Howitt, *N.T.S.E.A.*, pp. 145-8.
R. M. Berndt, unpublished report.
L. Parker, *The Euahlayi Tribe*, p. 29. Howitt (*N.T.S.E.A.*, p. 373) quotes a Wurunjerri: "Sometimes men only know about having their fat taken by remembering something of it as in a dream."

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to impress on others the "high degree" of knowledge and power they have reached, and so build up faith in their efficiency, an asset in the day of need. Initiations are favourite times for these exhibitions, no doubt because the young initiates are in a highly suggestible state, and will be duly impressed. This definitely occurred in south-east Australia, where "medicine-men," the men of high degree, played a very important part in initiation.¹⁹

Walking on Fire.

During one display in western New South Wales, after the bull-roarer had been swung, thus creating a mystic atmosphere, for it is the voice of Baiame (the sky cult-hero), the men present were told to sit around and stare into a big fire on the sacred ground. As they stared they saw a "clever-man" roll into the fire and scatter the coals. He then stood up amongst the rest of the men, who noticed that he was not burnt, nor were the European clothes that he wore, damaged. The informant and the others were quite satisfied the "doctor" was in the fire. In 1944 some Weilwan men told me that they had seen this same doctor "walk through the fire," naked and unhurt.

Aborigines, on ceremonial occasions, are able, in their excitement, to stamp on and scatter the burning coals of a fire without any apparent harm, and novices in initiation are sometimes tossed into a big smoke fire. But these displays of fire-rolling and fire-walking were thought to

(19) In central and north-western regions, headmen of local totemic cult-clans, or "lodges" take the lead in arranging series of totemic ceremonies for the education of the newly initiated. These ceremonies are concerned with the "eternal dream-time" and its heroes. The "doctors" do not, as such, play a leading part in these ceremonies. However, in the south-east, by virtue of their special association with the sky cult-hero and with the spirits of the dead, they did seem to act as the real masters of the ceremonies. See, for example, A. W. Howitt, *N.T.S.E.A.*, Ch. IX, *passim*, and compare *Nat. T.C.A.*, Ch. VII-IX, which describe initiation ceremonies, but make no mention of medicine-men. Howitt refers to the constant display by the medicine-men of their magic powers during initiation ceremonies ("On Some Australian Ceremonies of Initiation," *Jnl. Anth. Inst.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 445-6, 450).

go further. It is, moreover, in line with the claim and the belief that medicine-men can travel in a flame of fire, or send fire from their bodies along invisible cords to objects to which they had attached the cords. This power arose from a flame of fire having been "sung" into them by Baiame at their making.²⁰

The Use of Magic Cord.

During their making in South-East Australia, a magic cord is sung into the doctors. This cord becomes a means of performing marvellous feats, such as sending fire from the medicine-man's inside, like an electric wire. But even more interesting is the use made of the cord to travel up to the sky or to the tops of trees and through space. At the display at initiation time, in a time of ceremonial excitement, the doctor lies on his back under a tree, sends his cord up and climbs up on it to a nest on top of the tree, then across to other trees, and at sunset, down to the ground again. Only men saw this performance, and it is preceded and followed by the swinging of the bull-roarers and other expressions of emotional excitement.²¹ In the descriptions of these performances recorded by Mr. Berndt and by myself, the names of the doctors are given, and such details as the following: Joe Dagan, a Wongaibon clever man, lying on his back at the foot of a tree, sent his cord directly up, and "climbed" up with his head well back, body outstretched, legs apart, and arms to his sides. Arriving at the top, forty feet up, he waved his arms to those below, and then came down in the same manner, and while still on his back the cord re-entered his body.

Apparently, in this case, his body floated up and down

(20) Compare the ceremonial Fijian and Malay fire-walking, which does occur in actual fact.

(21) Including a ritual exchange of women.

in the horizontal position with no movements of his hands or legs, and the explanation must be sought in group suggestion of a powerful nature.²²

Mysteriously Disappearing and Re-appearing.

Another form of psychic display was to disappear from one spot suddenly, and appear in another, or to pass into, or out of, a tree. Thus one man (J.K.) said that at his initiation, a clever doctor (C.J.) was standing near the novices, when quite suddenly he disappeared, and then was seen standing with his back to them about one hundred and fifty yards away, turning from time to time to look at them. "He was doing this to show them all he was very clever."

Another doctor hit a tree and disappeared into it, like a stone sinking into muddy water. The reverse of this is given in the following episode: J.K. was about to doze off one morning while the "billy" was boiling, when he was awakened by an iguana touching his foot. Looking at it, he noticed that it turned its head round in the direction of some trees. So he sang out to his two brothers who were nearby, "that old fellow (M.D.) must be about here," for he knew that M.D. had an iguana inside him (that is, as a familiar). Standing up, he looked at the iguana, which suddenly ran back to a tree and disappeared. From this, they knew that M.D. must be inside that tree. Then they heard M.D. call out in a low voice, "Can you see me?" But they could not, until he gradually came out of the tree, which closed up without leaving a mark. He then walked up to them and said he had sent out his spirit helper to see whether they would recognize it.

Aborigines regarded dreams as actual material occur-

(22) This information was gathered by Mr. R. M. Berndt for the Wiradjeri and other tribes. A. W. Howitt referred to this use of cords and the power of travelling through the air. And I recorded the belief that the Forrest River medicine-man climbed to the sky on a cord. (See below, Chapters 3 and 4.)

rences, and this may have been a dream experience. The narrator, however, says he was wide awake, and if so, the "clever fellow" (M.D.), must have exercised some psychical power over the three men.

Creating Illusions.

Another incident illustrates the power of creating illusions in the minds of a group, but this time not merely for display, but to protect one's own group. Two medicine-men, having sent their group on ahead, lit a big fire, and, lying like logs on either side, sang a magical song. The enemy saw and heard them, but when they rushed in and speared the "men," the singing stopped, and they saw only two logs. But in the distance they could see the two "doctors" walking along. After this experience had been repeated several times, the enemy realized that they were being "played with" by very clever men, and so went home.

This may be only an elaboration of an able elusion of an enemy raiding party, and, wonders apart, medicine-men usually did play an important part on both the raiding and the defending sides. Magical help was essential.²³

Fast Travelling.

Medicine-men are believed to be able to travel at a very fast pace. This is obvious enough if the claim is to fly in sleep or in a vision to distant places, or to send their "familiar" on such journeys. But they can also run at a surprising pace for any distance, faster than anyone can run, and without getting tired or out of breath. They apparently run a couple of feet above the ground. Indeed, it has been said that the air has been made soft and solid, and that it moves along, carrying them with it. The

(23) Howitt (*N.T.S.E.A.*, p. 374) refers to the belief in the power of medicine-men to turn themselves into stumps, etcetera, and so avoid capture.

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explanation given by other Aborigines is that "these clever men can make their spirits take them along very quickly." Information regarding this form of progression comes from south-east Australia, especially western New South Wales, and eastern South Australia.²⁴

Aborigines are noted for their extraordinary feats of walking long distances, at what we regard as remarkable speed. Hunting and raiding on foot fits them for this. But the medicine-man's powers are said to exceed this, and to be more than physical.

MEDITATION

At the back of these claims to various psychic powers, for whatever they are worth, is the fact that Aborigines spend much time with their own thoughts, reflecting on dreams, and being ready, at any moment, to enter a condition of receptivity. The quietness and silence of so much of their life, the absence of rush and of urgent appointments, and the fewness of their numbers, facilitate this occupation with the psychic. Moreover, their totemistic and animistic view of life predisposes them to it.

Some persons, however, specialize in meditation as well as in psychic experiences. All men of high degree have practised it, but some do so to the exclusion of becoming adepts in other branches of magical and psychical endeavour. The temptation is to think that an Aborigine sitting down, apparently dreaming, is doing nothing. But he may be engaged in serious meditational and psychic discipline. It is to this aspect of their life that I desire to draw special attention.

(24) R. M. Berndt, special report.
W. Ramsay Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 191. The operators in *thumi* sorcery walk on air which the spirits have made soft and solid for a foot above the earth. The air also moves, carrying the operators direct to their victim.
Billy Emu, a famous Weilwan clever fellow, not long dead, was able to cover seventy miles in a day, as fast as horsemen. A. P. Elkin, *Field-notes*, 1944.

The following is a description by an Aboriginal informant of an old man meditating. It is translated freely from the native text in Yaralde.²⁵ "When you see an old man sitting by himself over here in the camp, do not disturb him, for if you do he will 'growl' at you. Do not play near him, because he is sitting down by himself with his thoughts in order 'to see.' He is gathering those thoughts so that he can feel and hear. Perhaps he then lies down, getting into a special posture, so that he may 'see' when sleeping. He sees indistinct visions, and hears 'persons' talk in them. He gets up and looks for those he has 'seen,' but not seeing them, he lies down again in the prescribed manner, so as to see what he had 'seen' before. He puts his head on the pillow as previously so as to 'see' (have a vision) as before. Getting up, he tells his friends to strengthen that power (*miwi*) within them, so that when they lie down they will see and feel (or become aware of) people not present, and in that way they will perceive them."

This describes how certain persons, abstracting themselves from what was happening around them, and concentrating on the psychic power within them, practised something akin to recollection. Lying down in the prescribed posture, they saw and 'heard' what was happening at a distance. In other words, they were clairvoyant. Indeed during such periods of meditation and vision, when this power and his own thoughts were as one, the "clever man" would see visions unconnected with earthly life. He would go to the world of ancestral beings.

This power, called *miwi* by the Yaralde of the Lower Murray, is said to be present in all persons, but to be especially developed by a few. All manifestations of psychic power are dependent on it—including white and

(25) The Yaralde is a Lower Murray River tribe. Text recorded by Mr. R. M. Berndt.

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black magic. Old people can use it so as to know who is coming and what is going to happen, whereas the especially gifted person, after much practice, can perform the quite remarkable acts already described. This *miwi* is said to be located in the pit of the stomach. And even as I wrote this, at Walgett, N.S.W., in August, 1944, amongst the Weilwan tribal remnants there, I was told how they seem to know events of importance to them, before it seems feasible that they should do so. And several of them have told me that the 'clever man' (*wiringin*) sent something out of his body (pointing to the stomach) to see things. Moreover, this something might even be a materialisation of himself, which could be seen by at least some persons miles away where it had been 'sent'; such persons being sensitives.

COMPARISON WITH TIBET

Some light on our Aboriginal men of high degree can be obtained by a comparison with those from Tibet, a country characterized by psychic specialization. There, "the great Yogi, possessed of clairvoyant vision, is said to be able to observe the physiological precesses of his own body. He requires no mechanical devices in order to traverse air or water or land, for he tells us that he can quit his gross physical body and visit any part of the earth or pass beyond the stratosphere to other worlds with a speed greater than light." As a result of his discipline and training, he can acquire fleetness of foot, lightness of body and immunity to harm by fire. He can become immune also to severe cold, the result of practising the Yoga of Psychic Heat. This includes concentration and visualisation of fire at the meeting point of the nerves at the psychic centre. The latter is situated four fingers below the navel. It is "the hidden abode of the sleeping Goddess Kundalini, the personification of the Serpent-

Power, of the latent mystic fire-force of the body.²⁶ And there, too, are located the *miwi*, the cord and the rainbow serpent or other "familiar" in the case of the Australian man of high degree.

Let us remember, too, one of the favourite exercises of the Yogi, the "Man of the Rule": sitting in a prescribed way on a prescribed type of couch, gazing at the end of his nose and not looking around about him, he becomes impassive to the perceptions of the sense, and enjoys boundless happiness.²⁷

Psychic Terrors.

To reach that high degree of psychic power by which one can send power out to bring death or life, to gain knowledge and to transfer thought without any hindrance of time or space, and to see visions, requires much practice, courage and perseverance. Dangers and terrors must be faced—dangers of a psychic nature, the creation probably of one's own psychic exercise or of one's perception. The following describes the experience to be expected by a Yarlalde postulant (Lower Murray):²⁸

"When you lie down to see the prescribed visions, and you do see them, do not be frightened, because they will be horrible. They are hard to describe, though they are in my mind and my *miwi*, and though I could project the experience into you after you had been well trained.

"However, some of them are evil spirits, some are like snakes, some are like horses with men's heads, and some are spirits of evil men which resemble burning fires. You see your camp burning and the flood waters rising, and

(26) W. Y. Evans-Wentz, *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines* (1935), pp. 23-4, 199, 192. In Bali, where Yoga is practised, the secret invisible fire (*geni rahasya*) is said to be located in the navel. W. Weck, *Heilkunde und Volkstum auf Bali*, 1937, p. 232.

(27) *Bhagavad-Gita*, translated by L. D. Barnett (Temple Classics, 1941, pp. 113-15, 188-9).

(28) Collected by R. M. Berndt.

thunder, lightning and rain, the earth rocking, the hills moving, the waters whirling, and the trees which still stand, swaying about. Do not be frightened. If you get up, you will not see these scenes, but when you lie down again, you will see them, unless you get too frightened. If you do, you will break the web (or thread) on which the scenes are hung. You may see dead persons walking towards you, and you will hear their bones rattle. If you hear and see these things without fear, you will never be frightened of anything. These dead people will not show themselves to you again, because your miwi (psychic force) is now strong. You are now powerful because you have seen these dead people."

In this we have a psychic explanation of postulants sleeping on graves, in some cases eating a small portion of a dead person's body, and so going to the sky and the spirits of the dead, of being met and killed by spirits and powerful beings of various types, and of having one's insides taken out, and even of being eaten or swallowed. I have met several persons who failed. At the sight of the ghost, they struggled and fled.

In Tibet, those who aspire to be great magicians and lamas, after long and hard training in ritual, words and dance, may become the subject of a mystic banquet. The postulant goes alone to a burial place or any wild site whose physical aspect awakens feelings of terror, especially one associated with a terrible legend or a recent tragic event. A place of this type is chosen for the rite so that the occult forces of conscious beings believed to be associated with such places, will come into operation during the performance. After the mystic preliminaries, the lonely celebrant who is in an intense state of excitement, calls the demons to feast on himself. He imagines that a feminine deity, who esoterically personifies his own will, cuts off his head, severs his limbs, skins him and rips open his abdomen. His insides fall out and his blood

flows like a river, providing a feast for his hideous guests. Hypnotized by the ritual, he urges them on with liturgic words of unreserved surrender. At length, this "red meal" comes to an end, the vision vanishes, utter loneliness follows, and the exaltation aroused by the dramatic sacrifice gradually subsides. And the candidate has passed to another stage of enlightenment and psychic power.²⁹ This reminds us of the abdominal operation in the ritual making of Aboriginal men of high degree.

Ritual Cannibalism.

Some of the Tibetan occultists are also believed to practise ritual cannibalism, but in esoteric teaching this is associated with a doctrine of transubstantiation. Some human beings "have attained such high degree of spiritual perfection that the original material substance of their bodies has been transmuted into a more subtle one which possesses special qualities. A morsel of their transformed flesh, when eaten, will produce a special kind of ecstasy and bestow knowledge and supernatural powers upon the person partaking of it."³⁰ So it is with the Aboriginal postulant in some regions. He partakes of the corpse and in mystic way sees the dead or visits the sky, thus deriving power and knowledge.³¹

Rapid Travelling on "Foot."

In Tibet, too, certain lamas, as a result of physical and psychical training, are able to tramp at a rapid pace and without stopping for quite long periods. One of these as seen by Mrs. David-Neel, proceeded at an unusual gait and with extraordinary swiftness. Her servants begged her

(29) Alexandra David-Neel: *With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet* (Penguin edition), pp. 139-54. For the Yoga text, W. Y. Evans-Wentz, *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*, 1935, pp. 301-18.

(30) *Idem.* p. 126.

(31) For example: the Wiimbaio, Ta-ta-thi, Bark nji and Wampangee. Chapter III.

not to stop him, because the lamas, when travelling, must not stop their meditation. If they did so, the "god" in them would escape, and they would die. The fact is that a *lung-gom-pa* traveller ran in a kind of trance, and a sudden awakening would painfully disturb his nerves. Actually the man did not run, but seemed to lift himself from the ground, proceeding by leaps or bounds, with the regularity of a pendulum. Another of these "runners" seen by this author, proceeded up a hill towards her party at an extraordinary pace, but when he arrived he was not out of breath. He seemed to be only half conscious. The trance, however, gradually subsided. Mrs. David-Neel is convinced that as a result of the physical training and of the training in self-hypnosis, a condition is reached in which "one does not feel the weight of one's body. A kind of anaesthesia deadens the sensations that would be produced by knocking against the stones or other obstacles on the way, and one walks for hours at an unaccustomed speed, enjoying that kind of light agreeable dizziness well known to motorists at high speed." Some of the initiates claim that eventually, "after he has travelled over a certain distance, the feet of the 'runner' no longer touch the ground, and that he glides on the air with an extreme celerity"³²—a striking parallel to the power attributed to Australian medicine-men.

Telepathy.

The telepathy which the Aboriginal men of high degree practise is also practised by the Tibetan psychic adepts. The Tibetans "assert that telepathy is a science, which can be learnt like any other science, by those who have proper teaching and are fit instruments to put the theory into practice."³³ The adepts ascribe the cause of the

(32) Alexandra David-Neel, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-97.

(33) *Idem.* p. 211. Evans-Wentz, *op. cit.*, p. 178, says that the art of transferring thought and visualisations has long been known to the masters of the occult sciences of the Orient.

phenomena to intense concentration of thought, requiring a mastery over the mind so as to produce "one-pointedness of thought." Moreover, the conscious receiver must have "tuned in" to receive or "pick-up" the thought waves. This demands the faculty of emptying one's mind of all ideas, reflections and mental images, and of discriminating between the various images, moods, feelings and influences which arise or appear. Some experts claim to be able to read the thoughts of others as well, and some to convey messages to complete strangers. Needless to say, years are devoted to these practices, and undoubtedly, according to some reliable observers, success is gained.

Mrs. David-Neel suggests that the extraordinary silence and solitude of Tibet offers favourable conditions for telepathy.³⁴ I have long thought that the silence and solitude of the Australian "bush," the absence of the noise and bustle of crowds, the lack of hurry, and the long hours with little to do, were conditions favourable to meditation and receptivity, to "tuning in" with the world, and to conjuring up pictures of persons and events not present. Sometimes the old white bushman or the Aborigine "just sits," but sometimes he "just sits and *thinks*," and to the latter at least, the thinking may include receiving, and for the man of high degree it may include "sending messages on the wind," to use a Tibetan term.

Sometimes the message as received is a vision, a materialization, and whether in Tibet or in Aboriginal Australia, that vision is no mere hallucination. It is a mental formation visualized and externalized, which may even exist for a time independent of its creator. Visions, too, which are sought must be distinguished from dreams. While the person is experiencing the vision, he cannot move, but he is conscious of what is going on around him. As one man of high degree of the Kattang tribe, N.S.W., told

(34) With *Mystics and Magicians in Tibet*, pp. 210-15 and 215-20, for Mrs. David-Neel's personal experiences.

me concerning his making: he could see and know what was happening, but was as one dead, feeling nothing.

A fully initiated man of the Weilwan tribe informed me that while camped with his wife on a sheep station where he was working, he had seen his father-in-law, a "clever man," standing just outside their tent. His wife, however, could not see the latter, although he said to her, "that old fellow is out there." Actually, the "clever man" was twenty-two miles away at his own camp, but admitted later that he was at that time also outside my informant's tent. He always knew when the latter was returning from his various places of employment. Apparently, these two were en rapport with each other, so that my informant "saw" the materialization of the clever man, and his mind was open to the later, even at a distance.

An incident similar to this was described by another informant. W——, a "doctor," was with some other Aborigines at the horse-yard on a station where they were working. When the rest set out for the camp, a quarter of a mile or so away, he remained at the yard, saying that he would catch up to them. When, however, they reached their camp, he was sitting there making a boomerang, as though he had not been away. They did not see him pass, and there was no hidden track by which he could have hurried around. The question arises, was he at the horse-yard in the flesh, or did he cause the others to see a materialization of himself there? My informant was one of those involved in the incident.

Such phenomena are reported from Tibet. Both Mrs. David-Neel and one of her servants saw independently and together a young Tibetan employee walking by himself towards the camp early in the morning, and wearing an unusual hat. He went behind a rock, but as he did not reappear, the place was searched, but no sign of him was found. Just before dusk that day he arrived with his caravan and wearing the strange hat. Careful inquiries

revealed that he had not been away from it. Mrs. David-Neel suggests that this was a kind of thought-form creation or visualization, but apparently generated unconsciously by the young man.

This same author refers to a striking incident at the consecration of the Tashilumpo monastery by the aged Kyongbu. He got into the sedan-chair which was sent for him, and which was closed and escorted. But to the astonishment of the thousands waiting at the monastery, he was seen coming alone and on foot. He walked straight up to a giant Buddha-image and gradually became incorporated in it. When the sedan-chair arrived at the monastery, it was found to be empty. Circumstances prevented Mrs. David-Neel from examining on the spot whether collective hallucination or some other phenomenon was involved, but the capacity, on the part of certain persons, of being "seen" in more than one place at one time is not doubted.³⁵

Aboriginal Secret Cults and Religion are Oriental.

I have referred to Tibetan occult practices principally because those of Aboriginal Australia seem to be of the same order, even if not so highly developed. They may even have degenerated from a common source. In any case, the practices are less systematized in Australia, at least partly because of the absence of written records. During recent years, a serious endeavour has been made to study Tibetan phenomena in a scientific manner, and as a result we may derive from them some understanding of the Australian phenomena.

It is possible that there is some historical connection

(35) Alexandra David-Neel, *op. cit.*, pp. 139, 180, 279-80, 285-8. Just before his death, the famous Tibetan Yogi, Milarepa, was seen in different places by different people at the same time, in each case performing appropriate acts. W. Y. Evans-Wentz, *Tibet's Great Yogi, Milarepa*, pp. 286-9. This author says that "the Perfected Yogi possesses the power of reproducing his phenomenal physical body in countless numbers, one such body in one place or world, another in another." *Op. cit.*, p. 269, footnote 1.

between the Yoga and occult practices of India and Tibet and the practices and psychic powers of Aboriginal men of high degree. Hinduism spread to the East Indies. Yoga is a cult in Bali, and some of the remarkable feats of the Australian medicine-men are paralleled by their fellow-professionals in Papua.³⁶

Moreover, the Aborigines hold the doctrines of pre-existence and of reincarnation, which suggest a northern source, just as the distribution of their practice of circumcision and of tree-stage burial ritual suggests an influence from the East Indies.

Apart from the interesting problem of origin, Australian Aboriginal religion, with its emphasis on mysteries and degrees of initiation, its doctrines of pre-existence and reincarnation, and its belief in psychic powers, belongs to the Orient, not to the West, and can only be understood in the light of the Orient. In the past, the custom has been to study and judge Aboriginal religion and magic from the point of view of the Occident. We have found the external universe of overwhelming interest, and sought, with much success, its explanation in mechanical and physical laws. Elated by our success, we have endeavoured with *limited enthusiasm* to apply those same laws to man as an individual and as a social being, and to the problems of life, consciousness and death. This was praiseworthy, but it is possible that this approach has led to our neglecting, or to considering as unworthy or "unscientific," certain phenomena which men have claimed to be important and potent. Many of us have tended to regard members of the Society for Psychical Research as queer beings. But it is scientific to study all phenomena, and to do so patiently, objectively, and, if necessary, with new approaches. And the powers of the

(36) F. E. Williams, *Papuans of the Trans-Fly*, p. 342. Wolfgang Weck, *Heilkunde und Volkstum auf Bali*, 1937, pp. 231-7, describes the application of Yoga-practices to healing in Bali.

human mind are worthy of such investigation. At least, we need to understand the self, that is, ourselves.

We of the west are so intellectual, so rational, in our approach to religion, that we have inhibited real freedom of thought with regard to religion. The Orient, however, so Dr. Evans-Wentz claims, is scientifically experimental in religion. It studies the ramifications and possibilities of the mind in the psychic sphere, and boldly experiments and makes inductions. The same writer maintains that "anthropology and psychology as applied sciences in the sense understood in Yoga are for almost all Occidental scientists mere dreams of impracticable visionaries." And he adds, as a result of twenty-five years of research, that he does not believe that this unsound view can long endure.³⁷ Our approach is the academic and rational one of Greek philosophers and the West. The Oriental approach is one of experiment and observation.

Conclusion.

The purpose of these lectures, however, has not been to make claims on behalf of psychic practices or research—I have no knowledge in such a field. I have only recorded and analysed phenomena, claims and beliefs. My object has been to show, firstly, that Aboriginal medicine-men, so far from being rogues, charlatans or ignoramuses, are men of *high degree*; that is, men who have taken a degree in the secret life beyond that taken by most adult males—a step which implies discipline, mental training, courage and perseverance. Secondly, that they are men of respected, and often of outstanding, personality; thirdly, that they are of immense social significance, the psychological health of the group largely depending on faith in their powers; fourthly, that the various psychic powers attributed to them must not be too readily dismissed as mere primitive

(37) Evans-Wentz, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-50.

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magic and "make-believe," for many of them have specialized in the working of the human mind, and in the influence of mind on body and of mind on mind; fifthly, that the ritual of "death and rising" by which they receive their powers includes and causes a deep psychological experience; and lastly, that as long as they observe the customary discipline of their "order," this experience continues to be a source of faith to themselves and their fellows.

In brief, Aboriginal men of High Degree are a channel of life.

Part II

THE MAKING AND POWERS

A SURVEY

CHAPTER III

THE UNCIRCUMCISION REGIONS

Plan of Survey.

This survey of our present knowledge of the "Making of Medicine-Men" and of their powers commences with eastern Australia, working from south to north and keeping within the region of the uncircumcised tribes; this includes the area south and adjacent to the Murray River, all New South Wales except the far north-western corner, and Queensland with the exception of its far west. The information is then given for the uncircumcision area of Western Australia, which lies west of a line joining Wollal to Esperance. The circumcision regions are then surveyed, proceeding from South Australia and the neighbouring region of Western Australia to the Northern Territory and Far Western Queensland, and finally the Kimberley Division of Western Australia.

This geographical approach is partly one of convenience, but it also recognizes the fact that medicine-men, being men of high degree, are not made until they have passed through the degrees which all men must take. In the circumcision region, these include the ordeal and mark of circumcision, and in most parts, of subincision also, but the other regions have not been affected by the diffusion of this comparatively recent rite and its mythology. It has yet to be shown, however, whether the presence or absence of circumcision in initiation has any close relation to the type of ritual for making medicine-men, or to their powers. There is, however, one interesting correlation. In the uncircumcised regions, the operations and most

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impressive experiences are said usually to occur during a trance, seldom when dead, whereas in the circumcision regions the central experience is frequently described as one of death or of being killed. In these regions, circumcision is a ritual act of "killing."

The survey proceeds from south to north because an analysis of mythology and ritual suggests that diffusion has been on the whole in the opposite direction. Therefore, by proceeding northwards, we may meet traits which were either dropped on the way, or which, being somewhat recent, had not yet spread all the way south.

SOUTH OF THE MURRAY

The Aborigines on the Lower Murray and around Encounter Bay had their "clever" men, but although our earliest informants, the missionaries, Taplin and Meyer, recorded interesting details about forms of sorcery practised in the region, they gathered no information of value regarding the doctors. Taplin wrote in 1873 that "there used to be a class of doctors amongst the natives called *kuldukke* men. They were great imposters." Meyer wrote that every tribe had its own doctor, who had only one remedy for every disease; but each doctor had a different one, namely the object, animal or vegetable, which he regarded as his friend or protector. Thus, one had a snake, another an ant, another seaweed, and so on. This "friend" (apparently, an assistant-totem or familiar), seems to have helped the doctor during the process of sucking the afflicted part of the patient's body.¹

During recent field-work for the Australian National Research Council, Mr. R. M. Berndt recorded native texts which show that amongst these people there was a class

(1) G. Taplin, in *N.T.S.A.*, pp. 23-31, for forms of sorcery, and p. 46 for depreciatory reference to doctors. H. E. A. Meyer in *N.T.S.A.*, pp. 195-7, especially p. 197. Taplin (p. 29) said that the Narrinyeri (of the Lower Murray) abhorred the horrible practice of the upper river tribes of extracting the kidney fat of their living enemies.

of "clever" men who specialized in meditation, hypnotism, thought-transference, and "seeing" what was occurring at a distance. They could even, by their psychic powers, turn sorcerers from contemplated evil acts. They could travel through the air on a cord (projected from their own bodies), take the form of any natural species, and make themselves invisible. Their "making" occupied several years, but the details are not known. These were probably similar to those recorded for the Wiradjeri and neighbouring tribes in the Riverina.

In the Gunditj-Mara and related tribes of south-western Victoria, the doctor can summon the aid of a spirit in his curative work, by going up to the clouds and bringing the spirit down. Apparently a séance is held. The men sit in a circle around a tree and the patient. Then the doctor and the spirit alight on top of the tree and from there jump to the ground with a thud. "The spirit gives his name; and after the doctor has felt all over the body of his patient, they both go up to the clouds again." The patient recovers. In illness the sick person's spirit may go away, but the doctor can bring it down with him in the form of a doll, which produces a moaning noise. The doctor presses the doll to the patient's chest to let the spirit return to the body. Sometimes in cases of severe illness, the doctor brings down ten spirits, who advise him regarding the treatment.

Occasionally, a doctor gives a display of his occult powers at the conclusion of a corroboree. He summons three or four female spirits, who dance around the fire and announce their names as those of deceased members of the tribe. Anybody can look at these spirits, but only the doctor can speak to them.²

The medicine-men of the Wotjobaluk and Jupagalk tribes of north-western Victoria are made by a supernatural being named Ngatya, who lives in the "bush."

(2) James Dawson, *Australian Aborigines*, pp. 55-58.

He opens the postulant's side and inserts in it such objects as quartz crystals, which give medicine-men their power. This includes fat-taking. They cut open the victim's right side, extract fat, then bring the edges of the wound together and, singing a spell, make them join without leaving a scar. Further singing causes the man to rise up, and at the same time a star falls from the sky with the man's heart. The same practice and belief exist amongst the Mukjarawaint and Jajauring. There is therefore an association between the medicine-man's surgical act and the sky. Indeed, although he is said to be made by a spirit living in the "bush," he is henceforth connected with the sky-world. The Wotjobaluk say that Bunjil, a great man who was once on the earth, and who is spoken of as "Our Father," lives in some place beyond the sky. It is beyond the Wurk-Kerun or dark place, which the medicine-men say is like a mountain. They can only go as far as this mountain, where they are met by Gargomitch, who takes their enquiries on to Bunjil. They probably reached the sky by way of a pine-tree which extended through the sky to the latter's abode.³

The medicine-men of these tribes were associated in another way with the sky. Some of them were seers, and amongst the Mukjarawaint, these had great influence "because of their power of communicating with the departed, up to whom they went." The home of the dead, according to the Kulin, was in the sky, which was reached by the rays of the setting sun. Indeed, in this tribe the power to see ghosts was a necessary qualification for training, which was given by a medicine-man. Part of the process consisted of smoking the novice with the leaves of the native cherry-tree and of anointing him

(3) A. W. Howitt, *N.T.S.E.A.*, pp. 414, 440, 368-71, 489, 490, 433. He comments that these tribes seem to have kept to themselves certain beliefs concerning their Sky-Being. Moreover, they had no initiation ceremonies of the general Eastern type, in which the beliefs about the sky-world and sacred objects were disclosed. (*Id.*, p. 491.) Howitt puts the Jupagalk on the east of the Wotjobaluk. (*Id.*, p. 55.)

with red ochre and grease. These were public acts; the real training was not ascertained.⁴

Jajauring medicine-men were made in the world of spirits which the individual visited for two or three days while in a trance.⁵ Those of the Wurunjeri tribe received their magical powers from the sky-being Bunjil, to whom they were carried by ghosts through a hole in the sky. Their powers included the extraction of "fat,"⁶ the use of many magical substances, especially quartz, and the power of going invisibly through space up to the sky and beyond it to Tharangalkbek, the "gum-tree country." In order to counteract a certain type of "contagious" magic, the medicine-man had to secure the spear-thrower which had been used in that process, and take it to this land beyond the sky, where it was put in water. The ascent was made by a cord through a hole in the vault. This sky-country is also the home of the dead, and is the place to which Bunjil ascended with all his people, after having taught the Kulin the arts of life. He instituted the dual organisation at the request of two medicine-men. The Wurunjeri medicine-men are therefore associated with the spirits of the dead, the sky-world, and Bunjil, the tribal All-Father.⁷

The Kurnai who occupied almost the whole of Gippsland, distinguish between the medicine-men and the Birraark. The latter were likened to seers, spirit-mediums and bards. They were initiated by ghosts in the "bush," and had to wear a nose-bone by which the ghosts could convey them through the clouds. They were admitted

(4) *Id.*, pp. 393, 438, 404. Howitt thinks that the Wotjo also put the home of the dead in the sky. Kulin is the word for man amongst several Victorian tribes. (*Id.*, p. 70.)

(5) *Id.*, p. 405. Compare A. W. Howitt, *Journal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. XIII, 1884, pp. 185, 186, 188.

(6) That is, the extraction of kidney or caul fat from a human victim without leaving a mark, death ensuing about three days later.

(7) A. W. Howitt, *N.T.S.E.A.*, pp. 405, 365, 375, 381, 435, 436, 491. The dual organisation is the division of the tribe into two social and ceremonial divisions, which are unilateral in descent, and usually exogamous. Vide A. P. Elkin, *The Australian Aborigines*, pp. 82-85.

at the entrance to the sky by the headman of the Sky-Land, where they saw people dancing, and learnt new songs and dances which they afterwards taught to the Kurnai. Ghosts also came and spoke to them, as in a séance.⁸

Medicine-men proper were made by the ancestral ghosts in dreams. This was done in two ways; in one, the ghosts came and communicated both harmful and protective chants and knowledge. They were shown quartz crystals and a magical object, *bulk*.⁹ The other method was similar, with the addition that the novice's education was completed elsewhere. For example, one individual, after dreaming of his father three times, was carried by a cord tied around his neck and waist, to Wilson's Promontory.¹⁰ There he was blindfolded and led into a great cave, where it was as bright as day. All the old men were round about. The initiate's father showed him a lot of shining things on the wall, and told him to take some. He was taught outside the cave how to make them go in and out of his legs. The ghosts then carried him back and left him up in a tree, where he found himself on waking. He was able to throw the shining things received in the cave, "like light in the evening."¹¹

Objective reality was attributed to dreams by the Kurnai,¹² but even so, the description of the making of their medicine-men cannot be dismissed as only a dream experience. Even were that possible, the elements of the dream would have to be accounted for. It is reasonable to suggest that the visit to the cave, the seeing of the old

(8) A. W. Howitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 73, 389, 399.

(9) This is a rounded and generally black pebble, which the medicine-man carried about and occasionally showed to people, as a threat. (*Id.*, p. 378.)

(10) Medicine-men were taken to the sky on a sort of rope, sometimes said to be like steps. One informant spoke of it as a road along which the dead went to the sky. (A. W. Howitt, *Jnl. Anth. Inst.*, 1884, p. 196.)

(11) *Id.*, pp. 408-409. In the Kurnai burial ritual, the "bundle" of bones, which had been carried about for a long time, was finally put up in a tree. *Id.*, p. 459.

(12) Howitt, *Jnl. Anth. Inst.*, 1884, p. 186.

men and the shining objects, the receiving of instruction in using the latter, and the ritual "burial" in a tree, had objective reality. The "making" must have included a period of seclusion in which the candidate received his power and instruction, and during part of which he was no doubt in a state of exhaustion and trance. The details of the trance-experience would be prepared for and controlled. Finally, the power of using magical substances, and of taking human fat, was no mere dream.¹³

The mountains of Wilson's Promontory, moreover, were the home of Lohan, who, according to a legend preserved by the Wurunjeri, came with his people from the Yarra by way of Western Port to Corner Inlet. From the mountains, he watches over his people, and the Kurnai believe that he makes their country deadly to strangers. He can still be seen. The person wishing to see him, must first obtain the consent of the Yarra people, sit for a whole day fasting and facing a fire, and then perform special ablutions for two or three days. The visitor is painted when about a day's journey from Lohan's special bit of country, which lies between Hoddle's Creek and the Promontory. Finally, in the early morning, he is conducted with downcast eyes, by some of Lohan's own men who have been with him all through, to a spot from which Lohan is seen for a moment—"clothed in mist and regarding with unnatural but human eyes these intruders—and all is over." "He indicates through his young men that he is pleased with the strangers. They have been obedient to his laws. Ever after, by the power of Loo-ern (Lohan), the strangers can kill all enemies, except those belonging to Loo-ern's country."¹⁴ This seems to refer to an initiation ceremony, by which individuals are made members of a group associated with a former tribal leader. It does not

(13) *N.T.S.E.A.*, pp. 361, 372, 378.

(14) *Id.*, p. 485. Brough Smyth, *The Aborigines of Victoria*, Vol i, 453-455.

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appear to refer especially to medicine-men, but it does show that the Kurnai dream-method of making medicine-men in a cave on the Promontory can reasonably be regarded as something more than phantasy or only a dream-experience.

THE COAST OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The source of magical power in the Ngarigo, Wolgal and Yuin tribes in the south-east of New South Wales is Daramulan, the culture-hero and sky being. Training is given by the medicine-men. The powers include the use of magical substances, especially quartz crystals, which are indeed given by Daramulan. Thus quartz is definitely associated with the sky-being. The extraction of human fat is also practised by the medicine-men. The wound made in this operation is closed up without leaving a mark.¹⁵

The medicine-men of the Port Jackson tribe obtained their powers by sleeping at the grave of a deceased person. The spirit of the latter seized the aspirant by the throat, opened him, and took out his bowels, which he replaced, after which the wound closed up.¹⁶ The Geawe-gal, who occupied part of the Hunter Valley, are reported to have had medicine-men who were in communication with supernatural influence. The Port Stephens medicine-men were generally the only persons to see Koin, the sky All-Father. The Gringai around Dungog believed that fat-extraction was practised by medicine-men of hostile tribes.¹⁷

(15) *N.T.S.E.A.*, pp. 405, 373, 376, 523, 437. The home of the dead is in the sky, according to the beliefs of these tribes.

(16) D. Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales* (edited by J. Collier), p. 383. *N.T.S.E.A.*, p. 405. L. Threlkeld (*An Australian Language*, p. 48), states that in the Awabakal language (near Lake Macquarie) *Morrookum*, is a magical bone, which is inserted into the thighs of each of three doctors by the spirit of a recently-interred person. They sleep on his grave, after which they can cause death by making the bone enter the body of their victim.

(17) *N.T.S.E.A.*, pp. 383, 376.

THEIR MAKING—UNCIRCUMCISION REGION

For the Kattang-speaking people who occupied the northern shore of Port Stephens and the country up to Taree, I learnt from a "clever man," *karadji*, that a postulant must have gone through the high initiation degree of *Bumban*, which took about six months, and included a severe fire ceremony and the revelation of a number of important symbols. The candidate 'died' at this ceremony, being thrown on the fire by men, then lifted up and kept over the fire until it was burnt out. Actually, the candidate 'felt' nothing because he was in a condition approaching hypnosis, though he could see what was there. He was restored by the old men putting their hands on his shoulder, after which he was shown secret symbols and taught their meaning. As a result the man became a new personality, and, as it were, no longer belonged to the earth, but to the sky-world.

It does not seem that all men went through this ceremony, and in any case, it did not make a man a *karadji* or 'clever man.' To reach this degree, the postulant had "to pass through the water." He was thrown into a *nambi* (sacred water-hole) by other *karadji*, or else threw himself into it. Such water was endowed with life-giving and curative properties. Sick persons would be cured by being put through it. While in the water, the postulant looked up to *Gulambré*, the sky cult-hero and asked for power. Having brought him out of this life-giving water, the other *karadji* restored him to normal consciousness by laying their hands on his shoulders. During a further sojourn in the "bush," he was given quartz stones to swallow, which he would later project when performing sorcery. He also acquired an individual totem (*tjirkun*) which would henceforth help him in his profession.

As a result of his making, the *karadji* could go up to the sky in a dream, work evil magic, cure sick people, and influence people at a distance. He could "think strong."

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The curative process sometimes included catching and restoring the spirit of the sick man.¹⁸

The Clarence River "doctors" were made by sleeping on the grave of a deceased person.¹⁹ The medicine-men of the Kumbaingeri (Coombangree), a Bellinger River tribe, went to the mountains at set seasons of the year. Whilst they fasted and endured privations there for months, "wild stones," quartz crystals, were placed in their insides by Ulitarra (the first man, who became their god). The large rock-crystal is the symbol of their Great Spirit.²⁰ Kumbaingeri medicine-men can see the spirit of a "murderer" hanging around the corpse of his victim, and by the performance of a rite, can "kill" his spirit, which means, of course, causing him to be ill. Three medicine-men are required to do this. They can also ascertain the name of the "murderer" by questioning the corpse on the way to burial.²¹

THE WESTERN DISTRICTS OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The Wiimbaio medicine-man was made by another one of the profession. The method included the procuring of the body of a dead man, the bones of which were pounded up and chewed. A state of frenzy was thus induced. Cannibalism was practised in this tribe. If the men caught any person of another tribe, whom they suspected of magical intentions, they killed him, and ate part of his body. Bulmer, however, says there was no sign of cannibalism, though the Wiimbaio did, by way

(18) A. P. Elkin, Field Notes.

(19) G. F. Angas, *Savage Life and Scenes in Australia and New Zealand* (1847), Vol. II, p. 233.

(20) A. C. McDougall, "Manners, Customs and Legends of the Coombangree Tribe," *Science of Man*, Vol. III, p. 117; E. Palmer, "Notes on Some Australian Tribes," *Jnl. Anth. Inst.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 296-7. Palmer refers to the "headman" or doctor or spirit-medium.

(21) A. P. Elkin, Field Notes. An informant told me in 1936 that he had seen magical cord produced from a doctor's mouth. He also said that during the period of seclusion and training, a large snake crawled over the postulant and put magical things in him.

of revenge, take out the enemy's kidney fat, which they used for anointing themselves, and for various magical purposes. The Wiimbaio "doctors" also used quartz crystals for magic.²²

We have no information about the making of the Ta-ta-thi medicine-men, but we are told that some of them obtained a special privilege of being carried aloft by the ghost of a woman. A medicine-man invoked her powers by chewing a piece of skin which he had cut from her stomach after death, and cured in the smoke of his camp-fire. He was thus able to visit the world of the sky, the latter being a solid vault, with a window which was guarded by a ghost.²³

Beveridge says that a medicine-man of the Laitu-Laitu tribe was made by sleeping for a month in the hut built over the grave of a medicine-man. He adds that it was usually the greatest scamp who was the candidate. One of the medicine-man's privileges was that he could with safety see a spirit called Konikatine, who dwelt in the profound depths of the lakes, water-holes and rivers. The "doctor" professed to go to the bottom of the river to him for days. He returned from his supposed visit with his eyes bloodshot, and his cloak covered with ooze, and gave accounts of his experiences. This descent was most likely part of the initiation, as well as henceforth a privilege and necessity, and represents the period of seclusion in which powers were given.²⁴ Laitu-Laitu medicine-men made rain by cutting off some of their own hair, oiling it

(22) N.T.S.E.A., pp. 404, 366-7; J. Bulmer, "Some Account of the Aborigines of the Lower Murray, Wimmera, Gippsland and Maneroo," *Vict. Geog. Jnl.*, Vol. V, pp. 16-18. Howitt (*op. cit.*, p. 367) gives an interesting account of the method of extraction, but it was credited to the men of hostile tribes. It seems to have been usual for blacks to ascribe to hostile tribes such practices as cannibalism and fat raking, which they felt met with the disapproval of white people. The Wiimbaio are the same people as the Maraura. Vide N. B. Tindale, "Distribution of Australian Aboriginal Tribes," *Trans. Roy. Soc., S.A.*, Vol. 64, p. 192.

(23) Howitt, *op. cit.*, p. 389; and *Jnl. Anth. Inst.*, Vol. XIII (1884), p. 197.

(24) Compare the Brisbane medicine-men, who dived to the bottom of deep pools to obtain their magical quartz, which was associated with the rainbow (Roth, *Bulletin*, No. V, p. 30).

with the kidney-fat of some victim, placing it in the river, and speaking to a good spirit named Ngoudenout. Konikatine was supposed to guard the camp against the kidney-fat stealer. The medicine-men were the only persons who had seen spirits.²⁵

We have no account of the "making" in the Bangerang tribe, but the taking of fat was practised, presumably by medicine-men. Curr says that "by means of a person's lock of hair, or remains of any of his food, and certain mysterious ceremonies, his caul-fat was surreptitiously extracted, when it was believed he either pined away or died," or met some fatal accident.²⁶

Medicine-men of the Wiradjeri were trained by their fathers,²⁷ but they had to go to Baiame, "the Sky-god," for their powers. The following are the main features of the experience, as described by one postulant: quartz crystals were rubbed into his body when he was a small boy, and were also put into water for him to drink. As a result, he could see ghosts. After his initiation he was given power to bring up crystals, a necessary part of the doctor's equipment. After this he was taken into a grave, where he saw a dead man; the latter rubbed him all over to make him clever, and gave him some quartz crystals. He was then shown a tiger-snake, to the tail of which a string was tied, such as the doctors bring up out of themselves. It was to be his secret totem, as it was his father's, who was initiating him. Taking hold of the string, he and his father were led by the snake into a hollow tree, in which were a lot of little Daramuluns, the sons of Baiame, and then on into a hole full of snakes,

(25) P. Beveridge, *The Aborigines of Victoria and the Riverina*, pp. 64, 96-97, 99-100. Beveridge refers to the Aborigines of Victoria and Riverina, apparently the Laitu-Laitu (A. R. Brown, "Notes on the Social Organization of Australian Tribes," *Jnl. Roy. Anth. Inst.*, Vol. XLVIII, 1918, p. 249).

(26) E. M. Curr, *Recollections of Squatting in Victoria*, 1883, p. 276. The mention of mysterious ceremonies suggested that the fat-taking was practised by a specially-trained person, such as a medicine-man.

(27) The office was apparently hereditary. Later research has shown that this was so.

which did not hurt him, but rubbed themselves against him to make him clever. His father next took him up to Baiame's camp on a thread. They entered the sky through the place used by the medicine-men. They saw Baiame, a very great old man, with a long beard, sitting in his camp with his legs under him. Two great quartz crystals extended from his shoulders to the sky above him.²⁸ There they found numbers of Baiame's boys, and of his people who are birds and beasts. It would seem that in becoming medicine-men, they also became Baiame's people, for amongst their claims was that of entering into birds and beasts, as well as of turning themselves into inanimate objects and of walking invisibly.²⁹

In 1943, I asked Mr. R. M. Berndt, who was doing research in the south-west of New South Wales for the Australian National Research Council, to see if there were any knowledgeable men, if not medicine-men, at Menindee. He fortunately found two reliable informants who had been brought up by medicine-men. They were not themselves "doctors," but were familiar with the powers and claims of the "clever fellows," and with the beliefs regarding them. The information gained corroborates and adds to what had been recorded by Howitt and Cameron. I give a summary of it here.

A postulant must have shown from his earliest years leanings towards the profession, and have been in close association with a doctor, preferably his father or father's father, who was willing to train him and to impart to him some of his knowledge. Special sentences were constructed and used when talking to such a boy to test his powers of interpretation. Secrecy was impressed upon him, and the simpler aspects of the profession were revealed to him. He grew in magical power, as well as in knowledge. For example, the "doctor's" spirit would take

(28) There was, apparently, a sky above the sky-world.

(29) *N.T.S.E.A.*, pp. 405-8, 374.

the child's spirit away with him at night, even up to the sky, when he climbed there on a "cord" to make rain.

When the lad was about ten or twelve years of age, the "doctor" "sang" into him the assistant-totem, (spirit companion or the "meat" (totem) within him). To do this, he chanted softly, and taking a little opossum from the air, he placed it on the lad's chest, or on some other part of his body, into which it sank. This totem was patrilineal, which was associated with the fact that the initiating doctor was the postulant's father or father's father. Actually the latter's assistant-totem caused itself to be doubled, so that it remained in the doctor, at the same time as it materialized in the air and was transmitted into the youth. The postulant was taught the methods of using it, and the song and ritual concentration necessary to release it from his body.

By the time the youth had been initiated into full tribal membership, he already knew some of the fundamental principles of his future profession, but he did not possess the power, insight or control to work magic. This was to be given later in a ritual and spiritual experience.

When the young man was between twenty and thirty years of age, Baiaime, the sky cult-hero, intimated in a dream to the postulant's "teacher" (or guardian) that he would receive him for the "making." Similar dreams occurred to other guardians in the same or adjacent tribes. They all met at a fixed time with their candidates at a sacred place. The latter were seated on a long "couch" of leaves, while the doctors sang to summon Baiaime. He came from out of the air towards the seated group. He looked like any doctor, except for the light which radiated from his eyes.

Coming up to each postulant, he said, "I'll make you," and caused sacred powerful water, called *kali* and said to be liquified quartz, to fall on him. This rite was called *kurini*, "the going into them." The water spread all over

the postulant and was completely absorbed. Then feathers emerged from the latter's arms, which grew into wings in the course of two days. In the meantime, Baiame had gone, and the postulants were taught the significance of the water and the feathers. They ate sparingly.

In the next stage, each young man was sent off to meet Baiame, who, taking him to a special place, taught him how to fly, and how to use quartz. Baiame sang a piece into his forehead so that he would be able to see right into things. He also took from his own body a flame, which he sang into the postulant's chest, and taught the latter how he could release it. Then, directed back to his camp, he flew, sang off his wings, walked in and sat alongside of his guardian, with whom he discussed his experience.

The third experience occurred after all the postulants had been "made." They went to the first sacred place, and lay again on a couch of leaves. After the "singing," Baiame appeared, placed a cord in "U" fashion across the chest and down the legs of each of them, and sang it into them. Henceforward, this was to be used as a spider uses his web. Baiame then bid them farewell and went away.

The young men, now doctors, remained in seclusion for two or three days practising magical displays.

According to another account given by Mr. Berndt of the "making" of a doctor, the 'experience' may come at a time or place without any pre-arranging or conditioning. In this case, the man who had been trained by his father in the necessary esoteric lore, had come to the end of a successful day's hunting, when he started to dig out an iguana. But he found himself dragged down and across to a strange country on the other side of the sea. Then Baiame carried him off to a very large cave, where he pierced him with his "X-ray" eyes and, looking into his

mind, asked whether he had been made a man, and also prepared by his father to receive Baiame's power and knowledge. On receiving an affirmative answer, Baiame "made a man of him again," and then made him a doctor in the way already described by Mr. Berndt's informants for the pre-arranged group-making. The doctor concerned was said to be a Kamilaroi man from Brewarrina, but the method was the same as of the Wiradjeri.

A comparison of the description given by Dr. Howitt with these two recorded recently by Mr. Berndt, suggests that the former had for the most part only been told the preliminary, though important and significant preparation of the postulant by his guardian (or teacher), usually his father or father's father. It consisted of being (i) tested and entrusted with some esoteric knowledge, (ii) endowed with an assistant totem (also the father's), and (iii) taken to the sky on the doctor's cord. Apparently, too, when Dr. Howitt's informant related that his father had caused quartz crystals to enter into him when he was a small boy, he was referring to his father's preliminary selection and magical preparation of him for his future career. The experience of being led into the tree and down into a great hole, which occurred immediately after an initiation ceremony, and being shown his assistant-totem, was probably an hypnotic and magical display, such as the doctors or clever men of this tribe gave on the occasions of initiation.

One problem of interest is whether the later ritual of "making" by Baiame was mainly a trance-experience and a materialization of what one had been taught to expect, or whether a doctor acted the part of Baiame. Probably both were true.

An outstanding feature in the "making" is the use of quartz, even in liquid form; it gives the doctor power to see right through into a person's mind, and to fly. It

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is closely associated with Baiaame in the sky, and with the spirits of the dead. The putting of the flame and the cord into the postulant's body equips him for his future activities of causing fire to run along cords produced from his body, or of travelling in a "pillar" of fire which does not burn anything. He can also send the cord out of his body up to the sky or the top of a tree, and climb up on it.

The Wiradjeri medicine-men practise not only the usual bone-pointing" and "contagious" magic, but also a special "pointing" in which use is made of the hair and fat of a dead man, whose spirit is supposed to help the charm to act. This suggests the taking of fat by the "doctors," but the Wiradjeri gave Dr. Howitt the impression that it was only practised by the "doctors" of tribes further down the Murray and Murrumbidgee rather than by their own doctors.³⁰ Recent inquiry, however, reveals that the latter did take "fat," extracting it through an elongated incision below the last rib on the right side.³¹

Wiradjeri medicine-men are also associated with Wawi, a serpent-like creature who lives in deep water-holes and burrows into the bank, where he makes his den. His wife and children live near. A medicine-man wishing to see him paints himself first with red ochre, and after a shower, follows the rainbow, the end of which rests over the water-hole. He dives under the bank, and finds Wawi, who takes him to his den and sings him a new corroboree, which he brings back to the clever men of the tribe.

(30) N.T.S.E.A., pp. 360, 361, 373, 374. The Murrumbidgee Aborigines sometimes come over to the Lachlan River by night, and, if possible, kill some natives and take their fat. (S. C. R. Bowler, "Aboriginal Customs," *Science of Man*, Vol. IV, p. 203). See also A. L. P. Cameron, "Notes on Some Tribes of New South Wales," *Jnl. Anth. Inst.*, Vol. XIV (1885), p. 361.

(31) R. M. Berndt's unpublished report. The wound was, as usual, closed up without leaving a mark, and the victim became ill two or three days later. The doctor might extract this fat while in a trance, sending out his assistant-totem in its spirit form, travelling in a whirlwind to seek the victim and to operate on him.

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Wawi has the magical power of varying his size from a few inches to prodigious proportions. The black streak in the Milky Way near the Southern Cross is one of his ancestors.³²

In the neighbouring tribe, the Wongaibon, between the Lachlan and the Darling, it is the personal totem which enables the medicine-men to perform magic, and he therefore has one or more. Professor A. R. Brown, who gathered this information, could not ascertain how the totem was acquired. A. L. P. Cameron says that the Wongaibon doctor, *Walmera*, is believed to acquire his powers either by being trained from boyhood by his father, or by being instructed by the spirits of the dead.³³ The Murawari medicine-man kept within his body an animal of the species which was his personal totem. He could produce it at will, and send it to work magic.³⁴ Knowing now that the medicine-man rites and beliefs in the Wiradjeri, Wongaibon, and Murawai tribes are similar and, indeed, that the "making" might be a combined ceremony, we can infer that this information for the Wongaibon and Murawari must be supplemented by that given above for the Wiradjeri. According to Mr. Cameron, the doctors in this region could visit the sky-land, where they would go after death. In one case, a doctor sucked some dried skin and fat from a human corpse, the ghost of which took him up and through a hole in the sky-vault. There he gained valuable information, after which he was made to return. This refers to a *Ta-ta-thi* "doctor," but Mr. Cameron says it is typical.³⁵

We have very little information for the rest of the west

(32) R. H. Mathews, *Ethnological Notes on the Aboriginal Tribes of New South Wales and Victoria*, p. 162.

(33) A. R. Brown, "Notes on the Social Organization of Australian Tribes," Part ii, *Jnl. Roy. Anth. Inst.*, Vol. LIII, 1923, p. 432; and A. L. P. Cameron, *op. cit.*, p. 360. Wongaibon *Walmera* is *Walemira* in Wiradjeri.

(34) A. R. Brown, *op. cit.*, 1923, p. 442.

(35) A. L. P. Cameron, *op. cit.*, pp. 360-1,

of New South Wales, with the exception of the Yualai. The Barkinji medicine-man showed his power by sucking from a victim a yountoo (dead man's bone) or a *moolee*, a piece of quartz which had been "pointed" at him. The ritual of "pointing" either of these missiles, which included the flesh and fat respectively of a dead body, was so complicated that only a specially trained person could perform it. He was probably a type of "doctor," especially as a *moolee*, a rough piece of white quartz, with a piece of twine fastened at one end, gave its possessor aid in composing new corroborrees.³⁶ The office in the Tongaranka tribe passed from father to son, but the latter only practised on the death of the former. The medicine-men of this and the other tribes of the Itchumundi nation used the fibula of a dead man for pointing.³⁷ Newland says that an old Wampangee medicine-man explained how he visited "heaven" when young. It was part of his "making." He was taught the lore by an old medicine-man, whose powers, on his death, descended to his pupil. The old man had instructed the latter to cut out and eat a piece of the flesh of his thigh as soon as he died. The young man did this, and his spirit flew at once to a place beyond the sky, where he saw the "goddess and the lesser female divinities" and good fruits and general plenty.³⁸ In the Kamilaroi tribe, the office was hereditary, and the practitioners could throw and extract stones. During an initiation in the most northern part of the tribe, the medicine-men produced white stones and other substances, and one of them drank human blood. One

(36) F. Bonney, "On Some Customs of the Aborigines of the River Darling," *Jnl. Anth. Inst.*, Vol. XIII, 1884, p. 130. Fat extraction was undoubtedly one of his powers. Mourning was ended by the taking of the sorcerer's caul fat. (E. M. Curr, *The Australian Race*, Vol. II, p. 199).

(37) *N.T.S.E.A.*, pp. 404, 360.

(38) S. Newland, "The Parkengees or Aboriginal Tribes on the Darling River," *Sth. Aust. Geog. Jnl.*, Vol. II, 1887-8, p. 31. He includes the Wampangee in the Barkinji community (*Id.*, p. 20). This agrees with G. N. Teulon in Curr II, p. 189. See also *N.T.S.E.A.*, p. 50, and R. H. Mathews, "The Group Divisions and Initiation Ceremonies of the Barkunjee Tribes," *Roy. Soc. of N.S.W.*, Vol. XXXII, p. 241.

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observer (Rev. C. C. Greenway) says that men could acquire magical or supernatural power, and refers to the use of magical stones and cords.³⁹

Yualai (Euahlayi) medicine-men select a boy who is to follow their profession. They take him to a tribal burial-ground at night, tie him down, and after having lit some fires of fat (not stated if human) at short distances around him, leave him there. The following is an account of one man's experiences when so left: A spirit came, turned him over and went. A big star fell beside him, and from it came an iguana (his totem) which ran all over him and then went away. After this, a snake, the hereditary enemy of the iguana, crawled on him, frightening him. Next a huge figure came, and drove a yam-stick right through his head, placing in the hole a sacred stone, with the help of which much of the initiate's magic in the future was to be worked. Then "came the spirits of the dead, who corroborated round him, chanting songs full of sacred lore as regards the art of healing, and instructions how, when he needed it, he could call upon their aid." He was released next day by a wizard, but was tied down again at night—this time on a bower-bird's play-ground, where he was again visited by the spirits of the dead and taught more lore. The bower-bird, before being changed into a bird, was a great medicine-man. Finally, the postulant was tied down for several nights in case he should be frightened. He was kept away from his camp for about two months, and was not allowed to become a practitioner until he was some years older.

The sacred stones, such as the one which was placed in the head of the novice referred to, are said to be about the size and shape of a small lemon, and like a lump of

(39) W. Ridley, *Kamilaroi and other Australian Languages*, 1878, p. 158; R. H. Mathews, "The Bora of the Kamilaroi Tribes," *Roy. Soc. Vict.*, Vol. IX, 1896, p. 167; C. C. Greenway in "Australian Languages and Traditions," *Jnl. Anth. Inst.*, Vol. VII, 1878, pp. 242-3. Fat extraction was practised (*N.T.S.E.A.*, p. 376).

semi-transparent crystal. Those who have the most stones are the most powerful medicine-men, and there is often a great rivalry at tribal meetings to see which wizard can produce the most. "The strength of the stone in them, whether swallowed or rubbed in through their heads, adds its strength to theirs, for these stones are living spirits, as it were, breathing and growing in their fleshly cases, the owner having power to produce them at any time. The dying bequeath their stones to living *wireenuns* (medicine-men) most nearly related to them." It is in such stones that the cleverest medicine-men see visions of the past, of what is happening in the present at a distance, and of the future. They can cause instant death by directing rays from these stones towards their victims. The spirit is said to go out of the crystal gazing stone to the person to whom knowledge is sought, and to show that person in the crystal.⁴⁰

Quartz crystals and medicine-men are associated with the sky-world and with Baiaame, the sky culture-giver. Only medicine-men are allowed to hold intercourse with him, and then only through his spirit messenger. Baiaame is fixed to the crystal-rock on which he sits. In order to get in touch with him, the medicine-men have to descend the mountain Oobi-oobi, beyond the top of which lies Baiaame's sky-home. Once when they wanted the earth to be made beautiful again after a drought, they did this in the following manner: coming to the mountain, they found foot-holes cut in the rocks, making a ladder. After four days, they reached the top, where they saw a stone excavation, into which bubbled up a spring of fresh water. From this they drank thirstily, and found it so invigorated them as to make them lose all feeling of tiredness. They saw circles of piled-up stones a little distance from the spring. Going into one of these, they heard almost immediately the sound of a *gayandi*, the medium through

(40) K. L. Parker, *The Euahlayi Tribe*, pp. 25-27, 35-36.

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which the voice of Baiaime's spirit-messenger was heard.⁴¹ Having made their requests, they were lifted by some of the attendant spirits of the sacred mountain through the sky to Baiaime's land. They were told to gather all the blossom they could, after which they were brought back to the mountain and returned to their tribe.⁴²

Some members of the Yualai tribe, principally medicine-men, or men intended to be such, have not only totems and sub- (or multiplex) totems, but also individual totems, called *yunbeai*, which they must never eat, or else they will die. Any injury to this totem hurts the person. "In danger, he has the power to assume the shape of his *yunbeai*, which, of course, is of great assistance to him. Further, an individual has a *Minggah* or spirit-haunted tree, which is usually chosen from amongst his multiplex totems. But the very greatest wizards, and they only, have instead spirit-haunted stones, which are called *Goomah*. A person's *yunbeai* or individual totem may be kept there, and spirits friendly towards the person whose *Minggah* or *Goomah* it is, dwell there. If a wizard needs such help as can be obtained from the spirits dwelling at his *Minggah* or *Goomah*, he either goes to them or else sends his dream-spirit to interview them. His dream-spirit is different from that of ordinary people, and bears a different name. He has complete control over it, but they have not over theirs. These spirit-animated trees and stones are places of refuge in time of danger, but the latter type possess the greater sanctity. Not even a medicine-man would touch a refugee at one of these stones, while at the former, the wizard whose *Minggah* it was, could interfere. Mrs. Parker's account

(41) Medicine men had to enter one of these circles on the mountain if they desired an interview with the messenger (K. L. Parker, *More Legendary Tales*, 1898, p. 90). The sound of *Gayandi* is the noise of the bull-roarer.

(42) K. L. Parker, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-92. The dead initiated men also go up to the sky world by way of this mountain (*Ibid*, *The Euahlayi Tribe*, pp. 90-91).

suggests that such centres are only connected with medicine-men.

Each individual Yualai has three, or perhaps four, spirits, one of which is his shadow-spirit. Here we meet with the special sanctity of the medicine-man; his shadow, like his head, is taboo. Anyone touching it will be made to suffer for such sacrilege.

In addition to consulting spirits for their own purposes, and practising crystal-gazing, the Yualai medicine-men hold mediumistic meetings, at which other persons can be present.

One of the special powers of the medicine-man is to use a pointing-stick, to the end of which is tied some hair taken from the intended victim's head.⁴³

In August-September, 1944, while engaged in work amongst the Aborigines, mostly of mixed-blood, in Weilwan and Kamilaroi country, I met one "clever man" or *wiringin*, to use the Weilwan term, and also several persons who had known *wiringin*, who knew something of their "making," and believed in their powers. The ritual was similar to that in the Wiradjeri, Yualai and Wongaibon tribes.

One or more *wiringin* took the aspirant to the vicinity of a burial place or a ghost place in the bush, and instructed him to lie down there, usually covered with bark. A fire of fat was lit nearby, and the novice was instructed to lie still, keep his eyes slightly open, and not be frightened even though a big snake crawled on him. This snake, or some other creature, would be his assistant totem or familiar, his "spirit." The doctors then went some distance away and watched. When the snake came the aspirant was told to pat it and not flinch. After this, the supreme test occurred. A ghost, like a skeleton, or

(43) K. L. Parker, *The Euahlayi Tribe*, pp. 27-29, 35-36, 20-21. Compare the sacred store-houses of the central tribes which are also places of refuge (Spencer and Gillen, *Nat. T.C.A.*, p. 135).

resembling a white corpse, appeared, usually coming down from a tree. I met two men and was told of four others who fled in terror at the sight of the spirit. One of those who failed, thought that the two officiating doctors brought the ghost down. He had noticed that just before reaching the burial tree in the "cemetery," a blaze of fire went through the air towards the tree, a sign of a *wirigin's* power. Clear stones (*kabara*), magic cord and a spirit animal (or reptile) were put in the postulant.

Training followed this experience. The new doctor was taught how to diagnose and treat illness, to produce the magical stones and cord and his assistant totem from his body, to summon the spirits, and to exercise various psychic powers. Years were required to become proficient in some parts of the craft, and some doctors were more clever than others. Amongst their powers were learning what was happening at a distance, by sending their spirit-helpers out to find out, or by going oneself in spirit form, travelling at a speed exceeding any normal speeds, disappearing as though into the air, giving displays suggestive of conjuring and hypnotism, and walking through the fire unharmed. The retention of these powers depended on some degree of self-discipline. For example, one "clever man" has lost, through excessive drinking, the power to know in advance who is coming.⁴⁴

The accounts indicate that the making and powers of medicine-men were of one type amongst the tribes in the eastern part of the Darling River system: the Yualai, Kamilaroi, Weilwan, Wongaibon and Wiradjeri, and possibly some of their neighbours also. The initiates of the "high degree" of these tribes formed an esoteric brotherhood, who shared a common knowledge and met occasionally, especially at inter-tribal gatherings, and whose knowledge was not questioned.

(44) Howitt quotes a similar case of the loss of magical power through drinking—a 'doctor' of the Kurnai tribe. *N.T.S.E.A.*, p. 409.

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(4) EASTERN AND NORTHERN QUEENSLAND

Medicine-men of the Chepara (Jagara) tribe (Brisbane district) could fly up to heaven to consult the supernatural being, Maamba, as the result of having swallowed some quartz crystal. They displayed a large crystal at initiation, which was said to come from Maamba. The power of the Turrbal medicine-man, together with his quartz crystal, was handed down from father to son. The special pieces of quartz which the medicine-men possessed were obtained from deep pools, creeks and similar places, where they dived for it. Targan, the individual who was responsible for the rainbow, vomited them out and deposited them in such places. The medicine-men knew where to dive for them, namely where the rainbow ended. They were also supposed to send rain and squalls, and to cut the rainbow off where it was held to the river-bottom. The crystals which the possessor could swallow and bring up again, gave him supernatural powers. With them he could dive into the ground and come out again where he liked. His spirit could take crystals through space and place them in a victim's body, and so doom the latter. This dooming meant "being cut up into small pieces and being put together again." The medicine-man could also fly through the air.⁴⁵

The Kabi and Wakka called this rainbow being Dhakkan or Takkan. He was a combination of fish and snake, and lived in the deepest water-holes. When visible as a rainbow, he was passing from one to another. He had a terrible side to his nature, for he could shatter trees and scrubs and slaughter men. A man with many crystals in his body could lie down to sleep on the margin of

(45) W. E. Roth, *Bulletin*, No. V, p. 30. Howitt, *N.T.S.E.A.*, pp. 398, 581-2. A falling star was a medicine-man flying through the air, and dropping his firestick to kill someone (*N.T.S.E.A.*, p. 429). Howitt (*op. cit.*, p. 86) puts the Turrbal immediately north of the Chepara, but overlapping the latter. They were probably one tribe, the Jagara. Compare N. B. Tindale, map in "Distribution of Australian Aboriginal Tribes," *Roy. Soc. S.A.*, Vol. 64, 1940, and p. 176.

Dhakkan's watery dwelling. The prickly sensation caused through the cold and sluggish circulation was regarded as a sign that he had been taken to Dhakkan's domain, where he gave the spirit magic stones and received cord or crystals in return. Such a person would wake up full of life, and be a medicine-man of the highest degree. His power was associated with quartz crystals, in particular, a large white one, which were carried both in his inside and in his bag. He also used certain flat circular black stones which were probably obsidianites. These stones and also some cord (*bukkur*) were bestowed on him by benevolent spirits inhabiting mineral springs.⁴⁶ The reference to a man having many stones in his inside before going down to Dhakkan for his endowment with power and life (*murū murū*, full of life), implies a preliminary stage in the doctor's progress.

The medicine-men of Fraser Island can fly up like birds, and go into the earth and come out again at a considerable distance. Further, they cannot be killed and will never die.⁴⁷ The office is hereditary on the Tully River, but nothing is known about the training. There are no special graduates at Cape Bedford, but certain old men assume the power of a medicine-man, and are described by the name of Danbun, a nature spirit identical with Aru-a, who teaches the practitioners of the Princess Charlotte Bay tribe. The Pennefather River medicine-men are said to learn their business at the graveside from the spirits of deceased persons. When they go away for a spell in the bush, they are believed to talk to the spirits, with whose assistance they control people's lives.⁴⁸

Speaking generally of the North Queensland tribes, Roth says that "many of the nature spirits are originally

(46) J. Mathew, *Two Representative Tribes*, pp. 170-2, 174-6.

(47) E. Fuller, in *Curr*, Vol. III, p. 147.

(48) Roth, *Bulletin*, No. V, pp. 30, 18.

derived from the bodies of dead people, that is, from spirits that have taken to the solitudes of the mountain or forest." The medicine-men can insert and withdraw the usual magical substances, including quartz crystals "with which their graduation or reputation is so intimately associated." They can control the forces of nature. In addition to deriving assistance occasionally from the dead and from nature spirits, they can also obtain it from the blood of their victims. Thus, amongst the Kungganji of Cape Grafton "the medicine-men used to doom their victims by choking them during sleep, piercing the head with a bone-splinter plunged just above each nostril, taking out the tongue and removing the life-blood." This blood had the property of enabling the medicine-men who drank it to fly over immense stretches of country.⁴⁹

In the Maikulan (Mycoolon) tribe, to the south-east of the Gulf of Carpentaria, the principal old men, or medicine-men, have charge of a particular kind of crystal, called *rore*, which is regarded as being in some way connected with their future existence. Such crystals are obtained from natives' insides by medicine-men, or, with some ceremony and much privation, in the mountain districts. The spirits of the dead, whose home is among the stars, show themselves to medicine-men.⁵⁰

Yir-Yoront medicine-men learn or inherit their art from a relative. In this tribe, sorcerers remove "kidney-fat" and other vital parts with a pointing-bone type of instrument, they send poison snakes and crocodiles to destroy their victims. The sorcerers, like the medicine-men, learn their art from a relative. It includes control of occult powers.⁵¹

(49) W. E. Roth, *Bulletin*, No. 5, pp. 28, 29, 34.

(50) E. Palmer, "Concerning Some Superstitions of North Queensland Aborigines," *Roy. Soc. Qld.*, Vol. II, 1885, pp. 166-7, 171-2.

(51) L. Sharp, "Ritual Life and Economics of the Yir-Yoront," *Oceania*, Vol. V, No. 1, pp. 35-6.

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THE SOUTH-WESTERN CORNER (WESTERN AUSTRALIA)

We have little evidence for the narrow uncircumcised strip of Western Australia. The medicine-men of New Norcia had the usual powers. These resided in certain little stones, a kind of quartz, in their stomachs, which passed at death into the stomachs of their sons.⁵² Grey referring to a larger area which included New Norcia, says that the natives of the South-West of Australia paid a respect, almost amounting to veneration, to shining stones or pieces of crystal which they called "Teyl," and which none but the sorcerers were allowed to touch.⁵³ The medicine-men were supposed to be able to transport themselves through the air at pleasure, and to render themselves invisible to all but others of the profession. They could hear everything, and could consume a person's flesh, but not his bones. Mrs. Bates says that the office was not hereditary in the South, but that it was so in the Gascoyne and Ashburton districts, though even here it was claimed that a man could make himself a medicine-man, with power to hold communion with a mythical snake named Kajoora. Crystals were used as elsewhere.⁵⁴

(52) R. Salvado, *Mémoires historiques sur l'Australie*, traduits de l'italien en français par l'abbé Falsimagne, 1854, p. 261.

(53) G. Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery*, Vol. II, pp. 340, 337.

(54) D. Bates, "The Marriage Laws and Some Customs of the West Australian Aborigines," *Vict. Geog. Jnl.*, Vol. XXIII, 1905, p. 57.

Chapter IV

THE CIRCUMCISION REGIONS

SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND THE NEIGHBOURING REGION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Medicine-men around Adelaide were associated with cannibalism in their "making," and with quartz in their practice. Aspirants had at one period to eat the flesh of young children, and at another that of an old man, though it does not appear that they partook more than once in their lives of each kind. "They have sacred implements or relics which are for the most part carefully concealed from the eyes of all, but especially from the women, such as pieces of rock crystal, said to have been extracted by them from individuals said to be suffering from the withering influence of some hostile sorcerers."¹ The Narrang-ga medicine-men could commune with the departed spirits and receive power from them to inflict evil magic by songs, but they could also work cures. The position was said to be hereditary.² The Pankala (Parnkalla) medicine-men had a special place after death, called "heaven's cavern." Their names seem to have been mentioned after death, whereas the names of other

(1) E. J. Eyre, *Journals of Expeditions of Discovery*, Vol. II, p. 359. H. E. A. Meyer says (in *N.T.S.A.*, p. 197) that the natives of Encounter Bay apply the term, *melapar* (sorcerer) to the Adelaide and more northern tribes, believing that "they have the power of transforming themselves into birds, trees, etc."

(2) A. W. Howitt, *N.T.S.E.A.*, p. 405. J. M. Sutton, "The Adjahdurah Tribe of Aborigines on Yorke's Peninsula," *Sth. Aust. Geog. Jnl.*, Vol. II, 1887-88, p. 19, says that the sorcerer would lie beside the corpse and have communion with the soul. This writer calls the Narrang-ga the Adjadura (Howitt, *op. cit.*, p. 67).

W. J. Kuhn (in Fison and Howitt, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*, p. 287) refers to the hereditary nature of the profession. Kuhn says that men called Gureldres professed to learn corroborres, songs and dances from departed spirits. He refers to this tribe (or part of it) as the Turra.

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people were tabooed for a considerable period after their decease. The office was hereditary.³ The medicine-men of the Yerkla-Mining are said to be the headmen.⁴ The Wirangu (at the head of the Great Australian Bight) say that a postulant is swallowed by Djidara, a large snake whose tracks are Lakes Gairdner, Torrens, etcetera, and after having passed through this creature's inside, becomes a medicine-man. The practitioners use shining substances such as *karar*, pearl-shell.⁵

The tribes of the Western desert of South Australia gathered around Ooldea in 1941-42, may be considered as one cultural group, because of the fundamental unity of their language, social organization, totemism and mythology. Amongst them, the doctor or *kinkin*, is also said to be a "clever" man. Like other individuals in the tribe, he can practise sorcery, but he is also a healer (*nangaringu*, one who sucks out), a rain-maker, an oracle, and a diviner of the cause of deaths; he can also counter-act alien magical influences, and can send his spirit in the form of his cult-totem to gather information from a distance.

The Making: The ritual and experience take place at Djabudi water-hole, South-West of Ooldea, which is associated with a great snake, Wonambi, who is alive to-day, even though his mythical exploits belong to the ancestral dream-time. He is the guardian of all doctors.

(1) The postulant, who must have shown leanings towards the profession at an early age, goes to Djabudi accompanied only by *kinkin*. He is mourned for as a person just dead, because he is going to be *daramara*, that is, "cut into pieces," but signifying that he is to receive power. At Djabudi, he is blindfolded with a hair-girdle

(3) C. Wilhelmi, "Manners and Customs of the Australian Natives, in particular of the Port Lincoln District," Roy. Soc. Vict., 1862, Vol. V, pp. 182-3.

(4) N.T.S.E.A., p. 313.

(5) A. P. Elkin, Field Notes.

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by two doctors, and given to the monstrous snake, who swallows him whole.

(2) After the postulant has spent an undefined period of seclusion inside the snake, the two doctors, who have been camped nearby, give the latter two kangaroo-rats, in return for which he ejects the postulant into the air so that he falls alongside a certain rock-hole.

(3) A little later, the doctors begin a journey of search for the postulant, visiting and camping at each of a series of rock-holes until they find him at the last one. But he has become a baby, Wonambi having made him like that. Taking him in their arms, they fly back to their camp.

(4) Here songs are sung and ceremonies performed by a group of doctors, who have gathered from adjacent "countries." The postulant is placed within a circle of fires, and as a result, he grows and attains again man's size. He then announces that he knows Wonambi, having been inside his stomach. He and Wonambi are friends.

(5) He next begins a period of seclusion, during which he meditates and has converse with spirits. At the end of this, doctors take him into the bush and red-ochre him completely. He is made to lie full-length on his back before fires, and is said to be a dead man. The head doctor proceeds to break his neck and his wrists, and to dislocate the joints at the elbows, the upper thighs, the knees and ankles. A black stone, a charmed australite, is used to "cut" the above parts of the body in this *daramara* rite. Actually, the operator does not amputate each part properly, but rather makes a mark with the stone. It is interesting to notice that before the "cutting," the postulant's limbs are taut like those of a corpse, but at the touch of the doctor, they become limp. This reviving of the limb is connected with the fact that the doctor puts into each cut a *maban* shell of life-giving

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properties. *Maban* are also put into his ears and into the angle of his jaw so that he can respectively hear (understand), and speak to, everything—spirits, strangers, and birds and animals; into his forehead, so that he can divine and see through anything; and into his neck, so that it may be turned in all directions. His stomach is also filled with *maban* in order that he may have renewed life, and become invulnerable to attack by any weapon. He is then “sung” by the *kinkin*, and revives. After this, all return to the main camp.

(6) On arrival there, a test is held. All the fully initiated men, when ordered by the head *kinkin*, thrust and throw their spears at the *aringbulga*, as the postulant is now called. But the spears glance off because he is full of *maban*. He is now a *kinkin* and can practise his profession.

This is a remarkable, but not unexpected, ritual pattern. It consists of (i) the postulant being swallowed by a mythical snake and reborn as a child; (ii) a fire ceremony and growth or restoration to adult size; and (iii) the treatment of the postulant as a corpse which is ritually cut into pieces, each piece or part being made to live by the introduction of a magical life-giving substance; indeed, the “cutting” with the charmed stone-knife is a life-giving act. The new life, so gained, is on a higher plane than the former one; the new doctor can see, hear, and say anything, and is invulnerable. No one concerned has any doubt that this sequence of events occurs; nor need we have any doubts; some do occur in ritual and symbolic action, and some while in a state of trance.⁶

When I was in the Musgrave Ranges, northern South

(6) For the outline, see R. and C. Berndt, “A Preliminary Report of Field-Work in the Ooldea Region, Western South Australia,” *Oceania*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, pp. 56-61. The information obtained by Mr. R. M. Berndt regarding the ‘making’ of doctors is especially reliable, both because of his knowledge of his native informants, and also because he had gone into the field with an adequate understanding of the problems involved.

For the cultural grouping of these tribes, see A. P. Elkin, “The Social Organization of South Australian Tribes,” *Oceania*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 60-2.

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Australia, in 1930, an informant told me about a big waterhole in the country of the Pitjintara (Pidjindara) tribe to the north-west, in which a big snake, Wonambi, lives. He is fed with kangaroos. Men going to visit this place are met by local men (that is, men of the local Wonambi cult-totem), who blindfold them and throw them into the snake's mouth. They are swallowed, kept inside for four days, and then vomited out. After this, they must remain four days, getting rabbits and other food for Wonambi. Men who have had this experience, have permanent red piebald "markings on their backs."

This is probably an exoteric and garbled account of the making of medicine-men, or else of a totemic rite which is performed from time to time at this waterhole. Some weeks later, and two hundred miles east, I was shown a stone *tjurunga* (totemic symbol), the markings on which depicted the tracks of Wonambi. It belonged to a man whose cult-totem was Wonambi.

I also heard of Wonambi in the Laverton district of Western Australia towards the end of 1930, and in addition recorded an interesting, though brief, account of the making of medicine-men. The latter referred to the Mandjindja tribe of the Warburton Range. Wonambi is a cult-totem and, as well as dwelling in certain sacred sites, appears in dreams. If a woman dreams that she kills and eats Wonambi snake, she will bear a child whose conception totem will be Wonambi. At one waterhole, Kolornga, the Wonambi is forty yards long and three feet thick. Wonambi at another place, Kadada, stands up as tall as the sky, and can fly to other places. Wonambi plays an important part in the mythology and cult-totemism of western South Australia and the adjoining region of Western Australia, which can be justly described as a great desert region. In such a region, where water is precious, a recognised function of the great snake, as the guardian of at least some special water-

holes, is understandable. Wonambi takes the water away when he "smells a stranger."

The account of the making which I recorded for the Mandjindja contains no reference to Wonambi, and a cave takes the place of a waterhole in the rite. The postulant goes into a cave where wega, the wild cat, and *kalaia*, the emu⁷ "kill" him and cut him open from his neck down the front of the body to the groin. They take out his heart, intestines and other organs, and insert magical substances, called *marbain*. They take out his shoulder bones, cut along the thighs and take out the thigh bones. They dry the bones and, before putting them back, insert *marbain*. They cut round the ankles and stuff *marbain* into those parts. Finally, they take the frontal bone out, clean it, and insert *marbain* in the head before returning this bone to its place.

During the "making" the "head" medicine-man makes fires at night; he sleeps during the day. After the postulant has been duly provided with magic, he makes him get up and gives him blood to drink.

This head doctor has *maban* or *marbain* as his cult totem. The totemic site is a stone cave in which a man, snakes and *marbain* can be seen cut in the stone. The postulant goes to this cave, and after having made a present to the "owner," is made to lie down and in due time comes out a medicine-man. Possibly a trance is induced and the postulant believes that magical substances have been inserted in his body in the interesting way just described; or, what is most likely, two doctors play the part of the totemic heroes, and ritually operate on him, making marks where the incisions and insertions would be made in an actual operation. He does drink human blood, and also eats wild cat, porcupine and emu.

A medicine-man apparently has spirits of these species

(7) I was informed that *kalaia* made the 'law' in this region.

in his "mind," for he can send them into a sick man to take his sickness out of him. Sometimes he may send a spirit-child, *djidji*, instead.⁸

This account, which corresponds to Stage 5 in the Ooldea description, is almost certainly incomplete. It is probable that Wonambi would come into the ritual at some point. He is associated with *kalaia* (an officiant, mentioned above) at some sacred waterholes (e.g., *Kumbudji*). But near Laverton, a great snake, there called *tarbidi*, protects the waterhole in the same way as Wonambi, and standing up like the rainbow (which he is), smells strangers. He is the supplier of shells which can be found in the soak, and which he is said to bring there from under the sea in another country. In other words, he is associated with pearl-shell or *marbain*, which is a source of power to the medicine-man. The doctors of this area act as coroners, as well as healers.⁹

Referring to the eastern part of this Aluridja region, to the Kokata and the Antakerinya, formerly on the south and north of Oodnadatta respectively, we find that the doctor can see the spirit of a dead person hanging around the grave, and is also able to catch hold of it and put it into a relative of the deceased (such as the widow, father, etcetera) or into some other person, or into himself, where it stays, acting as a guardian or assistant spirit. A doctor might have several of these spirits in him, and if he is called in to treat a sick person, he might send one of these assistant spirits to find and bring back the sick man's wandering spirit. Thus, the doctor has direct association with, and some control over, the spirits of the dead.

In northern South Australia, a medicine-man (*Nangari*) accompanies the revenge expedition, the members

(8) A. P. Elkin, Field Notes.

(9) A. P. Elkin, Field Notes, also "Burial Practices in North-Eastern and Western South Australia," *Oceania*, Vol. VII, No. 3, p. 291.

of which wear the "magical" *kadaitja* "shoes." After the victim has been speared, the *nangari* heats a white stone and puts it on the wound, causing it to heal without leaving a mark. He also puts a spirit-snake or something else of magical virtue in the victim's inside. Then starting the latter on the track which leads to his camp, he restores him to consciousness. The victim goes home as though nothing had occurred, but sickens in two or three days. This suggests that, because of his own experience of having been "killed," given magical insides, and raised, the medicine-man can do the like to intended victims. The same pattern is used to endow with power, or to kill. This principle is also obvious with regard to the "making" in the Aranda and other tribes.¹⁰

To pass to the north-eastern region of South Australia: in the Ngaduri tribe in the middle-north of that State, the postulant is singled out by medicine-men when a child, because he acts in a grown-up way. At puberty, unlike other growing boys, he avoids young women. After initiation, he goes into solitary seclusion, when he meditates, converses with spirits, goes into trances and sees visions. During this period, when he is considered ritually dead, he receives his power. At the end of it, he is trained by other "doctors." Until the age of thirty, he abstains from sexual intercourse.¹¹

The Dieri medicine-men (*kunki*) have direct communication with supernatural beings and spirits of the dead, called *kutji*, and also with the Mura-Muras, the mythological culture-heroes of the tribe. They interpret dreams, deciding which are victims caused by the *kutji*. They claim that like the latter, they can, by means of a hair-cord, go up to the beautiful sky-country, which is full of trees and birds, and drink its water, "from which

(10) A. P. Elkin, Field Notes. Also, above, pp. 42-3, and below, pp. 121-2, 129, 134.

(11) Berndt and Vogelsang, "The Initiation of Native Doctors in the Dieri Tribe, South Australia," *Rec. Sth. Aust. Mus.*, Vol. VI, pp. 376-7.

they obtain the power to take the life of those they doom."¹²

The *kunki* also act as coroners. When doing so, they usually either question the corpse, or see the murderer's spirit, unknown to himself, "hanging" around the grave or corpse. During dreams, the medicine-man's spirit, sometimes in totemic guise, may visit distant persons, or be visited by them.¹³

The Dieri medicine-man (*kunki*) is "made" by the spirits, although a medicine-man of his own totemic group may assist him. A young man who desires to be "made," must have shown great interest in tribal lore, a tendency to psychic experience and an attachment to the elders and medicine-men. One of the latter takes him into a "bush" place for a three-day period of seclusion. Here he meditates on the spiritual experience and powers about which he has been instructed, until the *kutji* or spirit, being materialized, "makes" him. On the first day, he gives the postulant special food and above all, changes his mind or way of thinking for that of a medicine-man. The *kunki* then explain this experience to him.

On the second day, an incision is made by the spirit in the young man's stomach, into which a spirit-snake is inserted. This spirit-snake can be sent, during meditation, to obtain information for the medicine-man. At some time or other, he visits the sky-world. A native "doctor," in giving an account of his "making," simply

(12) Howitt, *N.T.S.E.A.*, pp. 358-9. Bone-pointing is widely practised in this tribe, and the human ingredient which forms part of the instrument generally used, does not limit its use to medicine-men. This practice started in the days of the Mura-Mura heroes. *Idem*, 359-60. S. Gason in *N.T.S.A.*, pp. 275-6. M. E. B. Howitt, "Some Native Legends from Central Australia," *Folklore*, Vol. XIII, 1902, pp. 405-6.

(13) R. M. Berndt and T. Vogelsang, *op. cit.*, p. 374. A. P. Elkin, "Burial Practices," *Oceania*, Vol. VII, No. 3, pp. 281-2. There is no record of fat-taking by Dieri medicine-men or other persons, but there is a suggestion that one's kidney fat may be taken by spirits. Thus, if a man kills or hunts a crow, the *mungara* (spirit of the crow) will cut out his kidney-fat. It is also dangerous to collect wood in the evening, because the *kutji* could cut open one's abdomen and extract the kidney fat. O. Siebert, "Sagen und Sitten der Dieri und Nachbarstämme in Zentral-Australien," *Globus*, Vol. XCII, 1910, p. 56.

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said that on the second day the spirit performed (rites) on him, and on the third day told him that he was now a proper *kunki*, and so now he would give him his equipment.¹⁴

One Dieri *kunki* related to Siebert that, when still a boy, he was "made" by being tied up, taken to the Ranges and placed in a dark place, where a pointed stick was placed in the ground near him. He was asked whether he could see *kutji*, and when he answered "no," he was told that he would see him. Later, when he was in seclusion, following on his circumcision, he suddenly saw a light going and coming near him. Terrified, he fled from the *kutji*. But now he was qualified to become a "medicine-man," and was admitted into the mysteries by his father, a *kunki*.¹⁵

Obviously, the Dieri candidate is conditioned in body and mind for the traditional visionary experience. The spirit materializes and "makes" him; after this, he can be trained.

The only note I have for the Wailpi, of the Flinders Range on the south of the Dieri, is that the medicine-man can see the spirits of the dead.

Amongst the Piladapa (neighbours of the Dieri), the *kutji* drives into the back of the would-be doctor's head a round stick, somewhat larger than a pencil, with a string fastened to one end. The postulant then opens his eyes. In other words, he has a vision of being "pointed" by the spirit, and then gradually comes to. The spirit must always accompany a practitioner, for it is from the spirit that the *kunkikeri* obtains quartz and his power. If he has a serious grievance against a person, he kills the latter by extracting his heart, liver and insides generally.¹⁶

(14) Berndt and Vogelsang, "The Initiation of Native Doctors, Dieri Tribe, South Australia," *Rec. Sth. Aust. Mus.*, Vol. VI, pp. 375-6.

(15) Otto Siebert, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

(16) A. P. Elkin, *Field Notes*.

THEIR MAKING—CIRCUMCISION REGION
NORTH-CENTRAL AUSTRALIA AND NORTH-WESTERN
QUEENSLAND

Amongst the Arunta (Aranda), any man may employ sorcery, but the medicine-men alone can counteract its effects. They can cure the sick, conduct inquests, accompany the *kadaitja* revenge expeditions (as described for north-western South Australia), and act as mediums. Incidentally, dogs as well as medicine-men can see spirits, Spencer and Gillen did not gather that the doctors claimed to travel through the air, though they were told that amongst some tribes, for example, the Mungaberra, west of the Macdonnell Ranges, doctors assume the form of eaglehawks, travel long distances by night to camps in other tribes, and cause illness and death by digging their claws into the victims.¹⁷

Three methods of "making" are recorded for the Northern Arunta and Ilpirra. The first is carried out by the Iruntarinia, the Alcheringa, or ancestral, spirits, who from time to time undergo reincarnation. One place in which this is done is a cave ten miles from Alice Springs, of which the natives have superstitious dread. The spirits are supposed to live in this cave in perpetual sunshine, amidst streams of running water. The aspirant sleeps at the mouth of the cave, not venturing to enter, else he would be spirited away for ever. A spirit comes at day-break to the mouth of the cave, and finding the man there, throws an invisible lance, which pierces his neck from behind, passes through his tongue, making therein a large hole, and comes out through his mouth. A second lance pierces the head from ear to ear. The victim falls dead, and is carried into the depths of the cave. The Iruntarinia removes the man's internal organs and provides a new set, together with a supply of magical stones on which his power will depend. Later on, the man

(17) *Nat. T.C.A.*, pp. 530-3. Location of the Mungaberra is unknown.

comes to life again, but is for a time insane. When he has partly recovered, he is led back by the spirits to his own people. He remains strange for a few days, and then appears with a band of powdered charcoal and fat across his nose. He is recognised as a medicine-man, but does not practise for about twelve months. In the interval he learns the secrets of the craft from other medicine-men. These principally consist of the power to hide about his person, and to produce, small quartz pebbles and pieces of stick and to look preternaturally solemn.¹⁸

In this interesting method—which is associated with the great ancestors and introducers of culture—the chief experience during seclusion is interpreted as a death, during which new “insides” and quartz stones are substituted for the old internal organs. Restoration to life follows. The hole in the tongue is genuine, being an outward mark of the real medicine-man.

The second method is carried out by the spirits of the Oruncha men of the Alcheringa time, who are mischievous in nature. The procedure is the same as in the first method. The Oruncha of Chauritji, who lives near Alice Springs, occasionally seizes a man, takes him into the earth, and makes a medicine-man of him.¹⁹

Other medicine-men are the officiants in the third method. They extract small clear crystals from their bodies, and press them slowly and strongly three times along the front of the initiate's legs and up to his breast-bone, scoring the skin at intervals to make the crystals enter. The postulant then lies down while they jerk their hands, in which there are crystals, towards him.

(18) *Idem*, pp. 523-25. The details of the bodily experience here are similar to what I recorded concerning one magical cause of death in the Great Victorian Desert, far to the south-west. The victim is “choked” by pushing a “stick” (invisible, of course) through his collar bone, neck and tongue, and by inserting little stones and arm-blood in his ears, which are pulled, to make him deaf. In the Unmatjera and Kaitish rites, magical stones were thrown so as to go through the postulant's head from ear to ear.

(19) *Op. cit.*, p. 526. There are occasionally women “doctors” in these tribes. They are usually made by the Oruncha, but sometimes, also, by the Iruntarinia. In either case the method is the same as that for men.

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The scoring is repeated, and a crystal is rubbed on his scalp. A hole is made under the nail of the first finger of the right hand, in order to receive a crystal, and further, the novice is given meat supposed to contain crystals, and water in which small ones have been placed. All this is repeated on the second and third days, after which a hole is made in his tongue. He is then rubbed with grease, and a sacred representation of the Oruncha is painted on him, and a fillet of fur string and gum leaves is placed round his head. Instruction is given to the effect that he must remain at the men's camp until his wounds are healed, and must observe certain food taboos for a prescribed period. After his return to his own camp, the new "doctor" sleeps for some time with a fire between himself and his wife, so as to make himself visible to the Oruncha and to make it clear to the latter that he is holding aloof from everyone. Otherwise the magic power would leave him.²⁰

C. Strehlow, for the western Aranda, gives an account of the "making" which combines the second and third of the preceding methods. An evil being causes a man to be out of his mind and to run around all night without rest, and while he is doing so, "works" magical stones towards him, which penetrate his body, thighs, breast, tongue, head and finger-tips. The evil being then takes the postulant to the entrance of his dwelling in the west, where he knocks him about until he becomes unconscious, "drives" a kangaroo calf-bone into the back of his head and inserts magic stones into his shoulders, hips and stomach. At daybreak two evil beings lead him back to his camp, where their mocking laugh is heard. Two old doctors came out to their new colleague and drive the evil beings away to their abode.

These old doctors now take charge. The postulant recognises no one, not even his nearest relatives, but they

(20) *Idem*, pp. 526-29.

put into his ears magic stones, extracted from their own bodies, so that he will regain his hearing (understanding). They build a hut for him, feed him and instruct him, especially in the food restrictions and rules of the craft. After this, an old doctor pierces the top of the postulant's right forefinger with a pointed magic stick, to enable him to draw the object, which is causing the illness, out of a patient's body into his own forefinger and so on to his hand. Later, in the presence of the old man, and while they are chanting a "tongue-hole" song, a doctor cuts a hole in the postulant's tongue; this is to enable him to suck with his tongue the magic out of his patient's body. The young fellow has been under a ban of silence all this time, but it is now lifted at a rite in which the dough of a partly baked damper is sprinkled over his head and the heads of the other men present, and the rest of the loaf is given to him.²¹

This account makes clear what is usually only implied, that the mystic experience is followed by definite ritual acts and operations by 'old' doctors, the masters of the craft. They not only instruct the postulant, but magically insert objects into him, and in this case make holes in the forefinger and in the tongue.²² An interesting aspect of the procedure is the public nature of the tongue-piercing. The old men are present, apparently, even though they are not all doctors. This is true also of the final "bread" ceremony.

The methods in the Unmatjera and Kaitish tribes are essentially the same as in the Arunta. The medicine men are generally made by the spirits of the Iruntarinia class. But a celebrated Unmatjera medicine-man said he was made by another practitioner in the following way: a very

(21) C. Strehlow, "Die Aranda— und Loritja—Stamme," pp. 38-41. On page 42, a similar but shorter account is given of the making in the Loritja tribe.

(22) Spencer and Gillen, *Nat. T.C.A.*, p. 523, said it was impossible to say how this hole was made in the tongue in the case in which the doctor was made by spirits, but thought it must have been made by the postulant himself.

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old doctor threw some of his crystalline stones and killed the novice. Some of the stones went through the latter's head from ear to ear. He then cut out all his insides, intestines, lungs, liver, heart, in fact, everything, and left him till next morning, when he placed more of these stones in his body, arms and legs, and covered his face with leaves. After "singing" over him until his body was swollen up, he put more stones in him. He then patted him on the head, causing him to "jump up alive," and made him drink water and eat meat containing magic stones. When he awoke, he had forgotten who he was, and all the past. Indeed, the old doctor told him that he had killed him a long time ago. On his return to the camp, the people could tell by his strange behaviour what had happened. Here, as in the Arunta, the retention of power depends upon the observance of certain restrictions. The medicine-man must not eat too much fat, nor drink anything hot, nor allow a big ant to bite him.²³

This account fills what seems to be a lacuna in the Arunta account, and shows that in Central Australia, even when the method is of the third type (that is, "making" by other medicine-men) the seclusion is interpreted as a "death," followed by a restoration, and that during the state of "death," the "insides" are cut out and magical stones inserted.

The Waramunga medicine-men are made in two ways. In one, the agents are spirits of the Iruntarinia type. For example, in a case cited, the man was "boned" while asleep by two spirits, and died. They cut him open, took out his insides, provided him with a new set, and put in his body a little snake which endowed him with the "powers." They then left him. In the meantime his friends, becoming anxious, searched for him and eventu-

(23) Spencer and Gillen, *Nor. T.C.A.*, pp. 480-1.

ally an old man found his body, and returned to the camp to tell the others that he was dead. Preparations were made for the usual tree burial, and some men went to carry in his body. But by the time they reached him, he had come to life again, and they realized that he had been made a medicine-man.²⁴

But the great majority are made in the second way, namely, by other medicine-men, who must be of the Worgaia tribe. There is very great secrecy regarding this method. The graduates wear through the nose a little structure called a *kupitja*, which is both an emblem of the profession, and, in part, a source of their powers. The young "doctor" believes that it was made by some very powerful old snakes in the Alcheringa, and is full of magic. More food restrictions are placed on the newly-made medicine-man in the Waramunga tribe than further south. Their infringement causes loss of powers, also sickness, and probably death. Further, a young "doctor" must bring in the forbidden food for the old ones. While being "made," the candidates are allowed no food, drink or rest, and become stupefied. Their insides are cut open, and a new set of organs given. A snake, efficacious because it comes from the Worgaia men, is put into their heads, and finally one of the *kupitjas* is given to each of them. Such medicine-men are called *urtuku*, the general term for snakes.²⁵

The medicine-men of the Binbinga tribe are made by spirits called Mundadji and Munkaninji, the former being the father of the latter. The following is an example: One man was caught by Mundadji, who killed him, cut

(24) *Op. cit.*, pp. 481, 484.

(25) *Op. cit.*, pp. 484-6. Mr. W. E. Harney understands that in the Waramunga and Tjingili tribes, a doctor can impart his magic to another man by letting him swallow the "magic snake" of healing—a form of worm without teeth and with a jointed head and tail. The snake is then removed from his side. (W. E. Harney is author of *Taboo*, short stories dealing with culture contact in the Northern Territory, where he has spent nearly thirty years and has acquired much valuable knowledge of Aboriginal life and belief.)

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him open right down the middle, took out all his "insides," exchanged them for his own, and also put a number of sacred stones into the man's body. The younger spirit then came and restored him to life, telling him that he was now a medicine-man and showing him how to extract bones and other forms of evil magic. After this, he took him up to the sky and brought him down to the earth close to the man's own camp, where he heard the natives mourning for him, thinking he was dead. He gradually recovered from his dazed condition, and they knew he had been made a medicine-man.²⁶

The Mara rite is much the same as the Binbinga. Something in the nature of a request is first made by the postulant. He collects a considerable quantity of the fat of various animals, and, making a fire towards sunset in some lonely spot, he burns the fat. The smell, ascending to the sky, attracts the attention of two spirits called Minungarra, who live there. They come down and, knowing what the man wants, they tell him not to be frightened, as they do not intend to kill him altogether. They make him insensible, cut him open, and take out his insides, which they replace with a set of their own. He is brought to life again, and told he is a "doctor." Instruction in his craft is then given, after which they take him up to the sky, and bring him down near to his camp, where he finds that his friends have been mourning for him.²⁷

The "doctors" (*munkani*) in the Anula tribe are quite

(26) *Op. cit.*, pp. 487-8. When a medicine-man operates, the younger spirit is supposed to be watching nearby. The bone, when extracted, is thrown, unseen by those around, in the direction where the spirit is sitting. The latter, on the request of the doctor, grants permission for the bone to be shown to the natives.

(27) *Nor. T.C.A.*, p. 488. Amongst the powers of the Mara medicine-men is that of climbing at night by means of a rope invisible to ordinary mortals, up to the sky, where he can hold converse with the star people. Binbinga medicine-men, like those of the Mara, can see the two unfriendly sky-spirits as well as the friendly spirit who lives in the woods. (*Idem*, p. 501).

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distinct from those in any other tribes described by Spencer and Gillen. The profession is strictly hereditary in the members of the Falling Star totem, who are especially associated with two unfriendly spirits living in the sky. The "doctors" may be of either sex. Strictly speaking, they are wizards or sorcerers, for their powers consist of giving "bones," and not of withdrawing evil magic. This sole evil function distinguishes them from the medicine-men of most other tribes. In serious cases, the natives have to call in the assistance of a medicine-man from some friendly tribe. Otherwise they have special incantations which are sung, both to oust the evil magic, and to prevent it from entering them. The medicine-men of the Anula tribe sing to a friendly Alcheringa spirit to make the sick man well. They can see this spirit and also the two unfriendly spirits who live in the sky.²⁸

FAR NORTH-WESTERN QUEENSLAND

Medicine-men of the Pita-Pita tribe (Boulia) are made in several ways. In the usual one, the postulant leaves the camp for three or four days, fasts and becomes more or less "cranky." While in this state he sees a nature spirit called Malkari, who makes him a medicine-man by inserting in his inside certain small pebbles, bones, quartz crystals, and magical substances. Malkari is a supernatural power who makes everything which the Boulia aboriginals cannot otherwise account for.²⁹

Both here and in the Maitakudi (Cloncurry), the medicine-man is termed "the bone-possessor," because he uses a special and very powerful pointer, called *mangani*. It

(28) *Op. cit.*, pp. 488-9, 502. The term for doctor (sorcerer), *mankani*, is probably the Western Queensland word *mangani* (a death charm). See W. E. Roth, *Bulletin*, V, p. 29. The Mara term for doctor is *mungurni*. *Nor. T.C.A.*, p. 488.

(29) W. E. Roth, *Bulletin*, No. V, p. 29. *Ibid*, *Ethnol. Studies*, p. 153.

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consists of a human or emu bone, connected by human hair or opossum twine with a receptacle which is preferably made from a human shin- or arm-bone. The victim's life-blood is magically drawn into this receptacle. Medicine-men alone can use this "pointer," the potency of which lies in the quartz crystal that passes from it into the body of the victim. The Ulupulu (Oolooooloo) doctor causes a crane or pelican to go to the victim and point the receptacle, bringing it back with the required blood. This is said to be more potent than the ordinary method. Both systems were taught by Malkari to the Ulupulu, who kept the secret of this latter method, while the other was diffused all over the district.

Karnmari, a water-snake, is the officiant in another method of making a medicine-man in the Pita-Pita and other tribes in the Boulia district. A death-charm, a *mangani*, is pointed by the snake at the postulant. Four or five days later, the medicine-men remove from the latter's inside the identical pebble, bone, crystal, or whatever it might be, that was put in by the snake. He then recovers and becomes a medicine-man. The same magical object may be "inserted" in another novice, even when quite a child, to make him a medicine-man. The spirit of a deceased person can also make a medicine-man.³⁰

Medicine-men of the Maitakudi tribe are taught their profession by Tangalagulan, a "nature-spirit" or supernatural being. But if the spirit will not make himself patent, the individual has to make a long journey to the Diamantina River, to a certain encampment of the Goa tribe. After having made a present to his teacher, he is put to death and thrown into a water-hole for four days. On the fifth day, he is taken out. A number of fires are lighted round him, and thus his body is smoked quite dry, with the object of getting the water out of him, and so

(30) W. E. Roth, *Bulletin*, V, p. 29. *Ethnol. Studies*, p. 153.

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making him "all-right and alive again." Instruction is then given about the use of the death-charm.³¹

This information for far north-western Queensland and the Northern Territory Anula tribe refers mainly to the making and powers of sorcerers, and the use of the *mangani* "pointer." But the Queensland practitioners can also cure by extracting the material cause of the illness, and attributing that object to its sorcerer-owner. The latter, however, is said to have been employed by someone else, and the "doctors" consult as to the person to be held responsible. Amongst the Anula, however, the *munkani* are only sorcerers. In East Arnhem Land, too, as we shall see, there is a class of magicians, whose operations are wholly evil, though there is also another class whose work is positive and well-disposed.³²

ARNHEM LAND

Amongst the northern clans of the Murngin and Yaernungo tribes there is a belief in magic, but there are no magicians. In the southern and more western clans and tribes, however, magicians, good and evil (sorcerers), are prevalent.

The future sorcerer is taught by his father, father's brother, or mother's brother, the tendency being to get

(31) *Idem*, *Bulletin*, V, p. 30; *Ethnol. Studies*, p. 153. Neither the Maitakudi nor the Goa practised circumcision; but as they adjoined and mixed with circumcision tribes, with whom, as amongst themselves, sorcery of the *mangani* type played a very important part, I have included them here. Possibly the Maikulan, North-Central Queensland, also an uncircumcised tribe, almost adjoining the Maitakudi on the east, could be included here, as some of its beliefs seem to be the same; the doctors have association with *Limbeen-jargolong*, spirits of the dead in trees. (E. Palmer, "Notes on Some Australian Tribes," *Jnl. Anth. Inst.*, Vol. XIII, p. 291), while the Maitakudi doctors can be initiated by the spirit of a dead person *Lim-bi-ja-koolun* (Roth, *Ethnol. Studies*, p. 153). But no reference to *mangani* magic has been recorded for the Maikulan.

(32) Mr. W. E. Harney, however, tells me that the Anula have medicine-women who have received power and can heal the sick. Of course, this may be a development since Spencer and Gillen worked in the region, 1901-2.

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the power almost as a right from one's sorcerer-father. In any case, the novice must associate with the older sorcerer for a killing or two before his power is recognised in his group. The sorcerer's aim is to extract his victim's soul. To do this he may pull the person out of the camp by means of a rope placed around his neck, and then, opening the body beneath the heart, he pierces the latter with a stick, and catches the blood in a basket. The stopping of the heart-beats is a sign that the soul has been let out. The wound is so healed that no mark is left on the skin. The victim is made conscious, but as he returns to the camp the sorcerer hits him with a club and cuts his body in two several times, the parts flying like leaves and then coming together again. In spite of all this, the victim feels very fit on the day after his "experience," but becomes sick on the second day, and dies on the third.

In an alternative method, the sorcerer may bite a sleeping man's nasal bone, causing him to open his mouth and take a deep breath, which opens the heart. As a result, the soul comes out and goes down the sorcerer's mouth.

In stealing a woman's soul, a large blue fly is sometimes put in her. It flies out of her mouth with her soul. But a woman's soul may also be extracted by an operation on her heart.

The stolen soul seems usually to become a 'familiar' to the sorcerer, or else hangs around him, and may be detected by a medicine-man.³³

Murngin Medicine-men.—These are called *marngit*, and have powers of healing, divining a murderer (or soul-stealer), knowing what occurs at a distance, reading

(33) W. L. Warner, *A Black Civilization*, pp. 193-8.
T. T. Webb, "The Making of a *Marrngit*," *Oceania*, Vol. VI, No. 3, p. 336, says the sorcerers are called *ragalk*.

another person's thoughts, and exerting control over Muit, the totem python, who makes rain. The profession does not seem to be hereditary. Accounts of two 'makings' have been recorded independently by Dr. Warner and by the Reverend T. T. Webb (missionary in the district). In one case, the man, who had been confined to camp for a week with a sore hip, had a vision. Two familiars (a boy and a girl) spoke to him, with the result that he followed them out and back to camp. At night they sat on his head and shoulders, and also flew with the aid of their white feathers to the tops of the trees. Next day, he found them in the bush, and catching them in the hook of his spear-thrower, put them under his arms. But they left him before he returned to camp, telling him they were two *nari*, familiars, and that he must not start to practise his profession yet.

Apparently, the process of getting these spirit-helpers takes some time, for Dr. Warner's informant said that during the process he went around very quietly in one place, saying nothing, and eating only vegetable food. He made an old doctor his friend, whom he provided with food and tobacco, in return for training. Indeed, one of the spirits left the old doctor and came to him. At length, another *marngit*, after watching him carefully, said: "He is a true doctor all right; he has some things sitting on his shoulder"; and when one night, the rest of the group heard a clicking sound—a kind of beating against the new *marngit*'s shoulders, all doubts were set at rest.³⁴

This making includes (1) a vision of the 'familiars' in the guise of spirit children, who are henceforth to be the doctor's assistants, and (2) a period of instruction in which both these familiars and an old doctor play rôles; it is, in part, one of seclusion, quietness and psychic

(34) W. L. Warner, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-4.

practice in learning to 'see' things inside the sick, around the dead, or at a distance; the training would seem also to include ventriloquism and other devices. No bodily operation is experienced.³⁵

Both Mr. Webb and Dr. Warner describe the making of another doctor, Munyiryir (Moinyerenyer). The latter thinks that two spirit-*marngit* (one a male and the other a female) were attracted by some bandicoot which he caught.³⁶ At any rate, just as he was waking from an "after-dinner" sleep, one of the spirits half-stunned him and the other jumped on his chest. He attempted unsuccessfully to call his relations, but the spirit-doctors "thrust all manner of pointed objects into his body." After this, with the help of two younger spirit-doctors, they threw him into a waterhole, and when he began to drown, they pulled him out. The two elder ones then extracted all the pointed objects, so that he felt well again, and told him that he would be able to extract such things from sick people. According to Dr. Warner's account, the spirit-doctors opened Munyiryir's eyes, nose and mouth, and blew in his mouth, making him well, after which he hit them on the nose, and then, blowing on them, made them well again. They conducted him into a cave occupied by ghosts, *marngit* and python (his chief totem), and then brought him back to camp. The

(35) Mr. Webb summarises what seems to be information obtained from the same medicine-man, but at another time. The man concerned (Wilijangal, called Willidjungo by Dr. Warner) had a presentiment while returning from gathering honey, that the *marngit* spirits were approaching him. His bag got lighter, and during the night they entered it and made their sharp clicking sound. After this he became ill and unconscious, and then events went on as described above, except that there is no mention of the old 'doctor,' and that there is the additional claim by Wilijangal that he later acquired another pair of familiar spirits. These two keep him informed about sorcerers, and the other two give him power to heal. (T. T. Webb, *op. cit.*, pp. 337-9.)

(36) Mr. W. E. Harney tells me that in East Arnhem Land, an aspirant kills a bandicoot and hangs it up for four days. He crushes it with a stone and anoints his body with this substance. He now sleeps by himself, and the spirit of healing comes to him in the form of a bird and gives to him power to remove objects from sick people. This suggests that the smell of the bandicoot in a rotting condition (as Mr. Webb's account also suggests) is a necessary part of the rite and a prelude to the vision.

people there, noting his strange behaviour and hearing the spirit-marngit on his shoulders, realized that he was now a doctor.³⁷

This trance or vision experience differs from the preceding one, mainly in that it includes a ritual death (or near-death) which apparently enables the doctor to understand the experiences of the victims of sorcery, whom he will later be called upon to cure. It also includes a visit to a cave of ghosts and totemic and other spirits, which no doubt initiates the new doctor into his future association with such beings. It may be that the first informant, Wilijangal, had forgotten, or was not prepared, to divulge this 'ritual' experience of being "killed" and cured; or it may be that it was possible to become a doctor through a less unpleasant trance experience than Munyiryir's.

In either case, the doctor becomes equipped with spirit marngit, the means of his knowledge and power. Mr. Webb says that these familiars are the spirits of persons long since dead and forgotten. When healing a person by sucking, these familiars go inside the patient and bring the bone, etcetera, out. They also fly to obtain information of what occurs at a distance.³⁸

According to a private communication from Mr. W. E. Harney, amongst the Rembarunga, at the head of the Wilton River, if a man sleeps or camps upon the grave of a medicine-man, the spirit of the latter shows or gives to him the magic he formerly possessed and used.

(37) T. T. Webb, *op. cit.*, pp. 339-41. W. L. Warner, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-6. This introduction to the python, who controls rain, enables the medicine-man hereafter, in case of a dangerous flood, with the help of his familiars, to dive into the water, catch Mui, the totemic python, and send him down the totemic well again. The flood then goes down. W. L. Warner, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-9.

(38) Mr. W. E. Harney writes that in East Arnhem Land, a spirit disguised as a bird, e.g., a kingfisher, will fly around a man's head, and give him power to predict future events. Obviously, this bird is a marngit.

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The "making" of medicine-men in the Kakadu tribe³⁹ is associated with the first medicine-man, Joemin, and also with a great snake, Numereji, and his descendants. Numereji, at the end of his wanderings in the long past, went into the ground at Mungeruauera, where he can still be seen by medicine-men. Another sacred spot or "camp" was made by Joemin at Mulipaji, where he left some of the blood of a little Numereji snake. He drank some of the blood, and carried the rest in a shell. He gave the little snake to his brother, whose eyes he rubbed so that he might be able to look at the snake. In making his son a medicine-man, Joemin caused him to wash himself clean, showed him some of the snake's blood, rubbed it on him, and made him drink some. He then gave him the snake, after which the novice returned to camp and stayed in a new hut for four days with the snake. No woman could come near the hut, which was sacred. When he came into the common camp, he was a medicine-man. An important effect of the "making" was to have keen-sighted eyes, which could look through trees, men and rocks, and see any distance.

The following was the method used by Joemin in obtaining a snake: He went to a tree in which a child was buried, and took out some of its fat, especially the kidney-fat, and both heels. He put the former in the shell. Coming to a big hill, he made a fire at the foot of an ant-hill, and put some of the fat on it. A Numereji came out, which he took, rubbed and cleaned.⁴⁰

(39) This is one of the tribes in the north-west corner of Arnhem Land, which had not adopted circumcision before the spread of that rite was stopped by contact with white settlement and by consequent disintegration. I have, however, left it in its geographical context with the Murngin and Rembarunga tribes, with which it had also much ceremonial life in common, e.g., the Djangoan rite and maraian objects (see *Nat. Tr. Nor. Terr.*, and W. L. Warner, *op. cit.*). Moreover, the Murngin and other tribes of North-East Arnhem Land, like the Daly River tribes, while practising circumcision, do not practise subincision, an indication, in my opinion, that the introduction and adoption of the former rite into the region is comparatively recent.

(40) B. Spencer, *Nat. Tr. Nor. Terr.*, pp. 290-299. Medicine-man is *marunga* or *maringa* or *mari*.

Numereji is associated with the rainbow. The latter is supposed to be Iwaiyu, the shadow spirit, of a Numereji snake which on spitting makes rain and says: "Up above Iwaiyu, so spittle, my Iwaiyu." It does so in the form of a rainbow which is supposed to stop the rain. The rainbow, on melting away, is supposed to go back underground to Numereji. Numereji can also cause a child to be born dead, by taking away its spirit or Iwaiyu while the mother is bathing.⁴¹

The medicine-man's association with Numereji is of special value in a region where one's spirit part can be lured away or stolen. Thus, if while her child is still young, a woman drinks water or eats fish out of a deep water-hole, the child's iwaiyu spirit will run into the water-hole, be drawn down and eaten by a Numereji snake. But the medicine-man knows how to attract the spirit up again, and seeing and grasping it, he puts it in the mother's head, and it passes through her breast into the child again when the latter drinks.

Likewise, if a mischievous spirit from another tribe steals a young man's soul, a medicine-man, with a Numereji snake under his arm, can frighten the mischievous spirit, and rescue and replace the soul in the boy.⁴²

The Kakadu medicine-men are thus connected with what corresponds to the "dream-time" and its culture-givers, through the first medicine-men and Numereji, the rainbow-snake.

(41) *Nat. Tr. Nor. Terr.*, p. 326.

There is a similar association of the snake and the rainbow in the Anula tribe. In the far-past times, a dollar-bird had as a mate a snake called Ngurulia, who lived in a particular water-hole named Upintjara, "and when he wanted rain to fall, he used to spit up into the sky, with the result that the rainbow appeared and was shortly after followed by clouds and then by rain." A man of the dollar-bird totem can now make rain at this water-hole, by singing over a snake and an imitation rainbow. Certain taboos are observed regarding this spot. (Spencer and Gillen, *Nor. T.C.A.*, pp. 314-315).

The Waramunga, too, believe that the rainbow issues from the vent of a water-snake called Nappakandattha, in the form of a red oval plate. The great mythic snake called Wollunqua can also place it in the sky at pleasure, but they have no idea that it either prevents or assists the fall of rain. *Op. cit.*, p. 631.

(42) *Idem.*, pp. 346, 434.

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Amongst the Daly River tribes there is a belief in the existence of *mamakpik* or sorcerers, who are said to take a person's kidney-fat, and also of socially useful doctors, *miumdakar*. Dr. Stanner reports that a man becomes a doctor by associating in dreams with the spirits of the dead, and loses his power, once he ceases to dream of them.⁴³

Referring to one of these tribes, the Mulukmuluk, Mr. W. E. Harney tells me that a man who becomes a doctor is attacked in some secluded spot by numerous devils. These kill him by splitting him open along the abdomen, and then cook and eat him. The devils carefully collect the bones into a basket, which two of them rock until the man becomes alive again. He is then asked what type of *kurang* or doctor he desires to be, specializing in extracting deadly poison (*mauia*) or in extracting bits of bone, stones and such like. After this experience, he can learn the art of healing.

Amongst the Wardaman, the medicine-man receives power from Wolgara, the spirit who judges and guards the dead. Wolgara meets the aspirant in the dense scrub and there fights him, cutting him about, and eventually killing him. But in a dream, he is brought back to life by the ministration of the black hawk, who heals the wound without leaving a mark. Wolgara then summons a white hawk, which breathes life into the postulant, with the result that he returns to camp, but now endowed with healing power.⁴⁴

In both the Mulukmuluk and the Wardaman "makings," a spirit or spirits officiate; the trance-experience is one of death (caused by a fight and being cut about or

(43) W. E. H. Stanner, "The Daly River Tribes," *Oceania*, Vol. IV, No. 1, p. 25.
Knut Dahl, *In Savage Australia*, p. 21, says the devil (*barrang*, *bolongo* and *wurrang*) may take up its residence in a man and give him power to kill his foes by magic. At night he may go through the air until he stoops over his victim, and takes his fat.

(44) W. E. Harney, personal communication.

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open), followed by restoration to life, and endowment with new power, that of a medicine-man. Specialist-training must follow.

THE KIMBERLEY DIVISION, NORTH-WEST AUSTRALIA

In the Djerag and Djaru tribes, East Kimberley, the medicine-man is "made" by *Kulabel*, the rainbow-serpent, who 'kills' the aspirant when he is bathing at some water-hole. He feels that something has gone through, or happened to, his ears. He becomes sick and mad, and then receives his power. As in other regions, especially in Central Australia, the medicine-man loses his power if he has a hot drink.⁴⁵

Dr. Phyllis Kaberry includes the Djerag and Djaru along with other tribes of East Kimberley, such as the Lunga, Malngin and Miriwun, in her references to medicine-men and medicine-women. The medicine-man (*baramambin*) can cure illness, visit the spirits of the dead to obtain magical, curative and even injurious powers, and "divine" the murderer (that is, conduct an inquest). The medicine-woman (*baramambil*) possesses the first two powers, but not the third; this means dealing with a sorcerer (generally attributed to another tribe) and possibly causing his death, and is considered a man's work.

Medicine-men and -women are associated with the rainbow-serpent, *Kalera*, in their making, but it seems that only the male 'doctors' can approach this being with impunity, although Dr. Kaberry also states that, like the former, the *baramambil* may obtain magical stones from *Kalera*. The dead are visited by going up to the sky on a string.

In the "making," the postulant is taken away in her

(45) A. P. Elkin, Field Notes.

sleep by the spirits of the dead, given instruction, and returned to the camp, where for a few days she may be a "little bit mad, him deaf, can't hear." Later, she bathes in a pool where *Kalera* is known to dwell, and receives from him oval pieces of pearl-shell (*pindjauwindja*) and magical stones, or these may be inserted in her side. If her mother were a 'doctor' she might receive instruction from her.⁴⁶

In the Forrest River district, Northern Kimberley, a medicine-man, *malimber gude*, receives his powers ultimately from the rainbow-water-snake, *Brimurer* or *Ungur*. He is "made" by a fully qualified practitioner. The method is said by several informants to be somewhat as follows: The postulant is taken up to the sky by the medicine-man in one of two ways. A string hangs down from the sky, with cross pieces on which the two men sit. The string, in moving up, also moves sideways, from the south to the north, for example. This picture may be based on the rainbow. The alternative way is for the older man to take the form of a skeleton, sit astride the rainbow-snake and pull himself up with an arm-over-arm action on a rope. The postulant has been made quite small, like an infant in arms, and put in a pouch, which the medicine-man fastens on himself. When near the top, the latter throws the postulant out of the pouch on to the sky, thus making him "dead." Having reached the sky, the "doctor" inserts into the young man some little rainbow-snakes and some quartz-crystals, *maban*. I do not know if the medicine-man is supposed to obtain these magical articles up in the sky, or whether he takes them up with him, for he can get them down below at the foot of the rainbow. He goes along to a waterhole, and seeing the rainbow-snake there, catches hold of it, obtains these magical objects, and also another type,

(46) Phyllis Karberry, *Aboriginal Woman: Sacred and Profane*, pp. 251-2, 170, 185, 211-2 and 217.

called *kandela*, resembling crooked teeth. These, when inserted into the postulant, make him clever.

After the older man has brought the other back to the earth in the same manner as he took him up, he inserts more of these magical objects in him through the navel, after which he wakes him up with a magic stone. The young man returns to his normal size, if he had been changed, and next day he tries himself to go up to the sky. He receives instruction in his profession. This includes the use of quartz crystals and oval elongated pieces of pearl-shell, *pindjauandja*, which he carries about with him—not in his ‘inside.’ He learns how to project these into a victim through his back, thus causing his sickness and death, and also how to withdraw evil magic. He learns, too, the more homely remedies for ills, such as tying string round, or rubbing, the affected part.

He is trained as a medium, for a medicine-man can see the spirits of the dead whether they be about the bush or hanging round the grave, and can detect the spirit of a living “murderer” hanging round the grave of his victim. He also learns the technique of conducting an “inquest” and of playing his part in revenge. I have no record of any privations that the postulant has to undergo, but it is hardly likely that there would be none.

The medicine-men apparently take care not to let the ordinary people learn the secret of their powers, or the “make-believe” on which it is, at last, partly founded. Thus, when a “doctor” sees a rainbow passing across a big water-hole, he warns all the people not to go in there, or else they will be drowned. The rainbow is said to be the action of the water-snake in stopping the rain.

The reduction of the postulant to the size of an infant and carrying him in a pouch which is likened to a kangaroo’s pouch, suggests that the rite is pictured as one of rebirth. This is an extra detail to the usual method

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which is also present in this case, in which the aspirant is "killed," provided with new "insides" or an addition to his "insides," taken up to the sky, and finally wakened up or brought to life again.

These beliefs about the making and powers of medicine-men are common to all the Forrest River tribes, and also to the Wolyamidi. I did not hear that the medicine-men of these tribes practised fat-taking. A Wolyamidi informant stated that he had heard of it on the eastern side of Cambridge Gulf. Of course, this may have been merely a case of accusing the other party, feeling that the practice was condemned by Whites. A Forrest River medicine-man, however, does spear a victim. But when he does so, a sky-being, Tjadingin, who resembles an emu, comes down and closes the wound, so that no mark remains.⁴⁷

The Ungarinyin medicine-man is called *bainman*. This term is used in Dampier Land to denote certain objects inside the medicine-man, with which his special powers are associated. The Ungarinyin medicine-man "finds" Wonjad, the rainbow-serpent, in the water. The latter is also called Ungud, the equivalent of Ungur, one of the Forrest River names for the rainbow-serpent. The use of the same term, which denotes the heroic "dream-time" and the cult-heroes, is not surprising, for the eastern hordes of the Ungarinyin come into contact with some of the Forrest River district tribes. It is probable that the making and powers of medicine-men in both districts are similar.⁴⁸

According to an Ungarinyin informant, the medicine-men draw prestige from the eclipses of the moon and sun.

(47) A. P. Elkin, Field Notes. The Forrest tribes include the Yeidji, Andedja and others. See *Id.* *Studies in Australian Totemism*, *Oceania Monograph*, No. 2, pp. 79-80.

(48) A. P. Elkin, Field Notes. A. Capell, *Mythology in Northern Kimberley, North-West Australia*; *Oceania*, Vol. IX, No. 4, p. 394, says the "sorcerer is possessed of Ungud, who comes to him as he sleeps by a sacred pool, and this Ungud may desert him later, when he ceases to be a sorcerer."

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One of them, probably an unfriendly one, causes the face of the heavenly body to be covered with blood. The people are then frightened. After a while, another medicine-man goes up to the sky in a dream. When he returns he tells his countrymen that he had made the sun (or moon) better. A medicine-man also goes up to the sky after a lot of rain, hits Jandad, the thunder-being, with a stone and thus stops the rain.

In the Nyul-Nyul, Djaber-djaber, Bard and Djau tribes, the powers of a medicine-man *djalngokora* (*djangagor* in Bard) are associated with various objects called *bainman* (denotes 'inside'), inside the body of the practitioner. These are (a) *binji-binj*, or narrow pieces of pearl-shell about six inches long, pointed at one end; he is thought to have had these in him since his birth, although they are the same as the *binji-binj* ornaments worn by men in their head-bands at corroborees; (b) shiney white glassy stones (quartz crystals); (c) small bull-roarer shaped sticks about six or eight inches long, called *koranad*, and kept in the small of their backs; and (d) a small snake, and perhaps a small dog, or a small kangaroo and so on. Such a spirit reptile or animal is termed *djalng*, a word denoting both totem and also magical power. It warns its possessor of danger, and will also go out to do services for him, such as gaining information of events at a distance. This *djalng* or totemic assistant, is included in another term *rai* (invisible). For example, I was told that a certain lad would be a medicine-man because he had three *rai*, namely, turkey, fish and his spirit-double. Only medicine-men could see *rai*.⁴⁹

Some medicine-men claim to be able to make storms, hot weather, and so on, and also to be able to travel round in the air and see everything; this latter power is called *mamaror*. They say that they can also drop sickness

(49) A. P. Elkin, *Studies in Australian Totemism*, Oceania Monograph, No. 2, pp. 52-8.

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from the air, but I could find no instance of this, nor of any black magic. But they are credited with *mirua*, or the power of taking the caul-fat, especially from boys, without leaving a mark. The medicine-man has a little bag in which he carries stones, hair, shell and other objects.

In treating a sick person, the medicine-man rubs the afflicted part, generally the abdomen, and takes something away. This may be a material object or not. The rubbing is usually severe and causes vomiting. He also appears to take something from his own body with his hand and to press it into the body of the patient.⁵⁰

Making.—A person may be born with magical "insides." He has a strange look in his eyes, and is recognised by the medicine-men as one of them. When he coughs, he might drop a little shell.

A person may be "made." The aspirant asks a qualified man to initiate him. This person puts him to sleep, cuts open his abdomen and cleans it out with his magical shell and other instruments. He might replace the aspirant's "insides" with a new set, or he might leave the old ones, but in either case, he inserts magical objects. He then closes the incision, puts white feathers on it, and runs a fire-stick, *madagor*, along it to heat it. No mark remains. After this, he brings him to life again. The new medicine-man is sick for a little while. He receives training in his profession, and must get permission from older medicine-men before practising.

(50) Father Ernest Worms tells me in a letter (27/7/44) that he saw a Nyul-Nyul medicine-man operate in the following way on his own son who was unconscious, as a result of falling from a horse. The father knelt down by the boy, took his own *djalng*, with an appropriate gesture, out of his chest and pressed and rubbed it into the body of his son, who soon came to. Father Worms adds that the doctor's equipment includes a white jelly-fish, which is used for rubbing into his body.

In his "Aboriginal Place Names in Kimberley, Western Australia," *Oceania*, Vol. XIV, No. 4, p. 299, Father Worms says that the victim of Rai-Dog magic could be saved by a medicine-man who was able to dream of the hiding place of the abducted soul by winding the hair brow-band around his head. He slept beside his patient, after which he would visit the Dog Stone (a Rai place), pull the soul out of the hollow (in it), put it in his chest, and rub it into the body of his friend, who would then quickly recover.

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One old informant said that the aspirant was not cut open, but that the operator put a small snake and also shell into him while asleep.

From Bard and Djauí informants, I learned that the medicine-man takes a magical object, such as a stone, shell, or snake, from his "inside" and puts it inside the sick person; it gathers the "badness" and comes out of itself. The medicine-man, who alone sees it, picks it up, washes it and puts its back in himself. Some medicine-men have "little children" in their "insides" who can be used in the same way.

It was admitted by the Bard that a medicine-man could cause sickness, but not unto death, by touching a person in a dream with *kalakor*, an initiation bull-roarer; this might be done at the request of an injured person, for example, one whose wife had been stolen.

The Karadjeri doctor (*Djangangora*) is made by Bulang, a water-snake, which can be seen in the sky. His powers depend on the possession of magical substances, called *maban*, the term used for them at both Forrest River in the north, and Laverton a long way to the south-east.⁵¹

(51) A. P. Elkin, Field Notes. In the Bard tribe it is only a *djangagor* who can bring a *kalakor* out of the sacred ground, for he knows everything. See also "Studies in Australian Totemism, Oceania Monograph, No. 2, pp. 53-7.

Note: A table and map showing the distribution of the main features in the making and powers of Australian medicine-men may be seen in *Oceania*, Vol. XVI, No. 1, pp. 1-ff. (A. P. Elkin, "Ritual Distribution in Australia.")

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